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**FROM REVOLUTIONARY NATIONALISM TO NEOLIBERAL  
NATIONALISM**

**REDEFINING MEXICO'S NATIONAL SECURITY FROM THE EARLY  
1980S TO THE 1994 ZAPATISTA UPHEAVAL**

*by*

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**A thesis submitted to the Department of Political Studies in conformity with the  
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

**Queen's University  
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## **ABSTRACT**

From the financial crisis of the early eighties to the present, the vulnerability of both the Mexican political system and of the country's more disadvantaged classes and ethnic groups has increased markedly. The transition from a "revolutionary nationalist" to a "neoliberal" market-oriented set of policies, especially after the 1994 Zapatista upheaval, has challenged fundamental notions and practices of Mexico's national security. In the context of critical changes in world politics, particularly after the end of the Cold War, Mexico's experience calls for a more complex understanding of security in general and of national security in particular.

The direction of this thesis is both theoretical and empirical. It first reviews critically the epistemological and ontological underpinnings of the most influential notions of national security, and presents an alternative framework for the case study. Secondly, it traces the history of Mexico's gradual adjustment, from 1982 to the present, in response to the international forces of economic liberalization and regionalization. The centrepiece is a detailed empirical and critical analysis of the Zapatista upheaval that began in Chiapas in 1994. The events have underlined the pressing need to reassess the objective and subjective threats to the security of the nation-state.

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Finally, I owe all my gratitude to my friends and family who have always been supportive of my sometimes entangling projects.

*This thesis is dedicated to,*

*The 10 million indigenous people of Mexico whom we have ignored for more than 500 years.*

*To all those in Mexico whom I hope one day will wake up to see a brighter day.*

*To Angela, Diego and Alicia, my 'lampposts' that keep me from drifting.*

*To my Mother who has taught me to love unconditionally every living being.*

*To my father who has supported my dreams all along.*

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

<b>ANCIEZ</b>	<b>Alianza Nacional Campesina Independiente Emiliano Zapata (Independent Peasant Alliance, Emiliano Zapata)</b>
<b>ARIC</b>	<b>Asociación Rural de Interés Colectivo (Rural Association of Collective Interests)</b>
<b>CCRI</b>	<b>Comité Clandestino Revolucionario Indígena (Indigenous Clandestine Committee)</b>
<b>CDHFBC</b>	<b>Comisión de Derechos Humanos Fray Bartolomé de las Casas (Human Rights Centre, Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas )</b>
<b>CIOAC</b>	<b>Central Independiente de Obreros Agrícolas (Independent Organization for Agricultural Workers )</b>
<b>CISEN</b>	<b>Centro de Investigaciones de Seguridad Nacional (Centre for Intelligence and National Security)</b>
<b>CLCH</b>	<b>Coordinadora de Luchas de Chiapas (Organization for Chiapas Struggles)</b>
<b>CNA</b>	<b>Comisión Nacional Agraria (National Agrarian Commission)</b>
<b>CNC</b>	<b>Confederación Nacional Campesina (National Peasant Confederation)</b>
<b>CNDH</b>	<b>Comisión Nacional de Derechos Humanos (National Human Rights Commission)</b>
<b>CNI</b>	<b>Congreso Nacional Indigenista (National Indigenous Congress)</b>
<b>CNPA</b>	<b>Coordinadora Nacional Plan de Ayala (Plan de Ayala National Organization)</b>
<b>COCOPA</b>	<b>Comisión de Concordia y Pacificación (Commission on Concordance and Pacification)</b>
<b>CONAI</b>	<b>Comisión Nacional de Intermediación (National Intermediation Commission)</b>
<b>CTM</b>	<b>Confederación de Trabajadores Mexicanos (Mexican Workers Confederation)</b>
<b>EPR</b>	<b>Ejército Popular Revolucionario (Popular Revolutionary Army)</b>
<b>ERPI</b>	<b>Ejército Revolucionario de los Pueblos Insurgentes (Revolutionary Army of the Insurgent Peoples)</b>
<b>EZLN</b>	<b>Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (Zapatista National Liberation</b>



	Army)
<b>FD</b>	Frente Democrático Nacional (Democratic Front)
<b>FNDP</b>	Frente Nacional Democrático Popular (Popular Democratic National Front)
<b>ICCOHR</b>	International Civil Commission for the Observation of Human Rights
<b>INEGI</b>	Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía e Informática (National Institute of Geography and Statistics)
<b>INI</b>	Instituto Nacional Indigenista (National Indigenist Institute)
<b>ILO</b>	International Labor Organization
<b>LIC</b>	Low Intensity Conflict
<b>NAFTA</b>	North American Free Trade Agreement
<b>OCEZ</b>	Organización Campesina Emiliano Zapata (Emiliano Zapata Peasant Organization)
<b>PAN</b>	Partido Acción Nacional (National Action Party)
<b>PECE</b>	Pacto de Estabilidad y Crecimiento Económico (Stability and Growth Pact)
<b>PEMEX</b>	Petróleos Mexicanos (Mexican Petroleum)
<b>PIRE</b>	Programa Inmediato de Reordenación Económica (Immediate Reorganization Plan)
<b>PRD</b>	Partido de la Revolución Democrática (Democratic Revolution Party)
<b>PRI</b>	Partido Revolucionario Institucional (Institutional Revolutionary Party)
<b>PRONASOL</b>	Programa Nacional de Solidaridad (National Solidarity Program)
<b>SDN</b>	Secretaría de la Defensa Nacional (Department of National Defence)
<b>SECOFI</b>	Secretaría de Comercio y Fomento Industrial (Secretariat of Commerce and Industrial Development)
<b>SEDESOL</b>	Secretaría de Desarrollo Social (Secretariat for Social Development)
<b>SPP</b>	Secretaría de Programación y Presupuesto (Department of Budget and Planning)
<b>SG</b>	Secretaría de Gobernación (Ministry of the Interior)
<b>SRE</b>	Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores (Department of External Affairs)
<b>UU</b>	Unión de Uniones (Union of Unions)

## Chapter I

### Introduction

#### *The crises of the eighties and the emergence of neoliberalism*

During the summer of 1982, Mexico, under the administration of President José López Portillo, entered one of its worst financial crises. Foreign indebtedness had reached a staggering \$ 80 billion, of which \$ 60 billion represented loans to the public sector. By mid-August it was clear that Mexico would be unable to meet the payment of this debt. The value of the peso had declined by 76 percent between February and August of 1982. The rate of economic growth had slowed from 8-9 percent during the oil boom to zero in 1982. Inflation had reached 100 percent and continued to climb. It was clear that even after the emergency measures taken by the administration such as the nationalization of the banks, the freezing of all foreign currency accounts and the devaluation of the peso to 70 pesos to the dollar, the country would never again see the high rates of growth that it had known since the Second World War.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>For detailed analytical descriptions of Mexico's 1982 financial crisis see Judith Adler Hellman, *Mexico in Crisis* (2nd. edition) New York/London: Holmes & Meyer Publishers, 1988; Leslie Bethel, ed., *Mexico since Independence*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991. Joseph Kraft, *The Mexican Rescue*, New York: Knopf, 1984. On the López Portillo period see Gabriel Székely, *La Economía política del petróleo en México, 1976-1982*, Mexico: FCE, 1983. A unique source on the de la Madrid presidency is the annual publication of the Unidad de la Crónica Presidencial, Presidencia de la República, *Crónica del Sexenio. Las Razones y las Obras: Gobierno de Miguel de la Madrid*, México: Presidencia de la República, 1982-1988.

On December 1, 1982 a new administration came into power. Miguel de la Madrid, former Secretary of Budget and Finance, was also of a new breed of politicians: A lawyer and economist educated at Harvard, he was one of the so-called *technocrats* that have marked a radical change in the steering of Mexico's political economy. The new power elite redefined quite swiftly the specific political economic and social policies that would drive Mexico's political institutions and society into a new historical stage. The new administration was pushed to embrace the IMF directives that imposed one of the harshest austerity plans ever, the economy would gradually be opened to the international markets, and the state's role in directing and administering the economy would diminish. Mexico was waking up to one of the most rigid structural adjustments that has yet been experienced.

As we will see in this dissertation, from the "crisis of the eighties" to the present, the levels of vulnerability of both the Mexican political system and the more disadvantaged classes and ethnic groups of the country have increased to critical levels. The transition from a so called "revolutionary nationalist" to a "neoliberal" market-oriented set of policies has had serious effects on Mexico's security that, after the 1994 Zapatista upheaval, have challenged fundamental notions and practices of national security. Therefore, we have a turning point in Mexico's history that, in the context of critical changes in world politics, particularly after the end of the Cold War, presents us with the need for a more complex understanding of security overall and of 'national security' in particular.

From these developments derive a number of problems with which the dissertation will concern itself. These can be summarized in the following questions:

- Can dialectical relations of causality be found between the economic

liberalization processes and Mexico's present security problems, particularly concerning the rise of social and political violence in the more marginalised areas of the country?

- Why must the nation-state's 'national security' concerns, notions and practices, within the context of a set of 'neoliberal' economic policies at a national, regional, and international level be reassessed?
- Can the traditional notions of national security in IR be useful for an objective understanding of Mexico's present national security issues, or do we need an epistemological and ontological reassessment of such notions?
- To what extent has the dominant notion of 'national security' in Mexico, and its related policies, been synonymous with 'regime security'?

To address the above questions, we explore the following propositions: Mexico's political, social and economic structures have been significantly pressured, particularly in the past two decades, by (1) the political-economic adjustments occasioned by the decisions in the early 1980s to liberalize Mexico's economy and (2) by an international environment dominated by a set of economic and political regionalisation processes based on economic and political liberalism. The consequent political and social threats posed by such pressures have placed a critical strain upon the Mexican nation-state and its more vulnerable social forces, particularly regarding the definition of what should be its 'national security' concerns, notions and practices.

*Political changes and the limits of traditional perspectives in International Relations*

World politics have witnessed a set of radical changes, particularly since the relative decline of US hegemony in the early 1970s, and the collapse of the Soviet Union and the socialist system the late 1980s. As a result of these changes, particularly after the collapse of the Soviet Union, new debates about how we should understand the causes of social and political conflict and their national security effects have challenged key assumptions of traditional approaches to International Relations. The result from these debates has been a serious questioning of two critical issues in IR<sup>2</sup>: 1) the dominance of a 'positivist program' that has proven its epistemological and ontological flaws, particularly regarding the *reification* of the international system and the state; and 2) the artificial separation of politics, economics, and ideology.<sup>3</sup>

In addition to these flaws, we have to challenge two main doctrinal positions that have permeated the discipline of International Relations overall and security studies in particular:

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<sup>2</sup>For a synthesis of these debates see Steve Smith, Ken Booth & Marysia Zalewski (eds.) *Positivism and Beyond*, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

<sup>3</sup>The separation of politics and economics for understanding international relations, that had its foundations, for the economic side, in classic Liberalism and on the political side is Hans Morgenthau, was sanctioned by Kenneth Waltz in his *Theory of International Politics*, when he stated that: "Theory isolates one realm from the others in order to deal with it intellectually. To isolate a realm is a precondition to developing a theory that will explain what goes on within it. . . neorealism establishes the autonomy of international politics and thus makes a theory about it possible" (quotation used in Buzan's, Jone's and Little's critique of neorealism in the *Logic of Anarchy: Neorealism to Structural Realism*, New York : Columbia University Press, 1993, p. 10. Regarding the pessimistic and static perspective of the international system, it is found in the interpretation that some influential realists have made of Hobbes' "state of nature" in which states are constantly in a 'state of war'. For a very influential statement of such a view see Robert Gilpin, "The Richness of the Tradition of Political Realism," in *International Organization* 38, 2, Spring 1984: 387-304.

- A pessimistic one, often identified with ‘realism’, which has justified and promoted the use of military force to resolve political and economic tensions, or to advance the interests of a particular hegemonic project.
- An idealistic or ‘universalistic’ one, which, although has promoted the establishment of international political and legal regimes for peace and stability, has also justified the expansion of specific hegemonic projects based on universal claims. Moreover, it has underestimated the adverse effects resulting from omitting particular historical socioeconomic and political structures at both a national and international level.

Another problem encountered in traditional approaches to IR is that of a quite restricted set of levels of analysis. Although we agree with the need to have clear and distinct levels of analysis,<sup>4</sup> we consider that a neo-Marxist perspective, particularly a neo-Gramscian one, can achieve this with a twofold advantage over traditional approaches: 1) It offers us more complex and multilevel insights on the historical causes of social and political tensions that, at both a domestic and international level, can pose real, or perceived, threats to the security of nations and individuals. 2) It permits us to identify the key social and political

---

<sup>4</sup>One of the aims that we do acknowledge from the classical school was to find specific levels of analysis that could help us understand with more precision the dynamics of the international system. For this, Kenneth Waltz’ *Man, The State and War*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1959, followed by J. David Singer, “The Level of Analysis Problem in International Relations,” in Rosenau, James (ed), *International Politics and Foreign Policy*, New York: Free Press, 1969, pp. 20-29 were important efforts. Even through the newest revision of the *problématique* by Barry Buzan in “Levels of Analysis Problem in International Relations Reconsidered”, in Ken Booth and Steve Smith (eds.) *International Relations Theory Today*, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995, traditional security studies does not aim to develop a broader and more complex set of levels of analysis beyond the political and military issues (although Buzan mentions the need for this he unfortunately does not present an alternative project). pp. 198-217.

forces that, from the political and economic antagonisms which historically confront them, transform, or attempt to maintain economic and political structures that *mutatis mutandis*, determine the nature of the state and its dominant national security notions and practices.

The sub-fields of International Relations Theory and Security Studies have been permeated by an epistemology and ontology that reflect a specific set of beliefs, principles and methodologies. These have clearly responded, beyond a search for 'objectivity', to an ideological justification for the 'universal' or hegemonic role of a particular set of dominant Western ideals and interests, emerging particularly in the United States from the ashes of World War II.<sup>5</sup> As Robert Cox once pertinently suggested 'theory is always *for* someone and *for* some purpose'.<sup>6</sup> What this dictum reflects, more than the 'natural' relativity of social sciences, or the 'incommensurability' of its paradigms, are the political and ideological

---

<sup>5</sup>We specifically refer to the dominance of Liberalism in most social scientific research in the United States, particularly in International Relations and International Political Economy. After World War II, the United States has played a critical role in reinforcing, through both economic hegemony and the use of force, its peculiar set of liberal principles regarding free markets and 'democracy' at a global level. These principles have been the cornerstones of most international regimes and institutions including obviously the North American Free Trade Agreement which ironically did not consider the 'democratic' side of the liberal equation. For an excellent review of the actual expressions and contradictions of liberalism in both the academic and policy-making spheres see A. Claire Cutler, "Global Capitalism and Liberal Myths: Dispute Settlement in Private International Trade Relations", in *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, Vol 24, No. 3, Winter 1996, pp. 377-399; also: Stephen Gill, "Globalization, Market Civilization, and Disciplinary Neoliberalism," *Ibid.* pp. 399-425; Andrew Hurrell and Ngaire Woods, "Globalization and Inequality," *Ibid.* pp. 447-471; David Long, "The Harvard School of Liberal International Theory: A Case for Closure," *Ibid.* pp. 489-507; John Gerard Ruggie, "At Home Abroad, Abroad at Home: International Liberalisation and Domestic Stability in the New World Economy," *Ibid.* pp. 507-527; and Richard Falk, "Liberalism at the Global Level: The Last of the Independent Commissions?," *Ibid.* pp. 563-578.

<sup>6</sup>Robert Cox, "Social Forces, States and World Orders: Beyond International Relations Theory," in Robert O. Keohane, (ed.), *Neorealism and its Critics*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1986, p. 207.

complexities of social reality involved in defining the object of study.<sup>7</sup>

*The need to reassess security issues overall and national security issues in particular*

We concur with several theses regarding the need to consider broader interpretations of security.<sup>8</sup> For a country like Mexico, which has been historically in a position of economic dependency, national security concerns, notions and policies, are related not only to military threats arising from its interactions with other states, but also to the antagonistic nature of its

---

<sup>7</sup>Understanding social reality (and we must include international relations as such) as a separate object of study from our consciousness has been an obsession of the Enlightenment that, although it has played an important role in secularizing knowledge, has also produced a set of 'traps' in which we can lose track of the historical, materialist and intersubjective causes of such reality. But, let's not fool ourselves: all theories that derive from and are shaped by social beings have a particular perspective (which does not mean that all social phenomena are subjective or relative in nature). Again, as R. Cox states furthermore in his article "Social Forces, States and World Orders: Beyond International Relations Theory", op.cit. p.207 that:

All theories have a perspective. Perspectives derive from a position in time and space, specifically social and political time and space. The world is seen from a standpoint definable in terms of nation or social class, of dominance and subordination, of rising and declining power, of a sense of immobility or of present crisis, of past experience, and of hopes and expectations for the future.

<sup>8</sup>See particularly Barry Buzan's second edition of *People States and Fear: A New Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era*, Boulder, Col.: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1991 (which is quite different in content although not in spirit from the 1982 edition) in which he states that "Although the term 'national security' suggests a phenomenon on the state level, the connections between that level and the individual, regional and system levels are too numerous and too strong to deny." (p. 363.). Also see Ken Booth (ed.), *New Thinking About Strategy and International Security*, London: Harper Collins, 1991; Simon Dalby, "Contesting an Essential Concept: Dilemmas in Contemporary Security Discourse," *Norman Paterson School of International Affairs Occasional Papers Series*, No. 6, 1994; Richard Ullman, "Redefining Security," in *International Security*, Vol. 8, No. 1, Summer, 1983, and R.B.J. Walker, "Security, Sovereignty, and the Challenge of World Politics," in *Alternatives*, Vol.15 No.1, 1990.



internal socioeconomic and political relations, which derive in part from its dependency.<sup>9</sup>

Moreover, we consider, as others have during the past two decades,<sup>10</sup> that traditional approaches to security studies,<sup>11</sup> have presented serious epistemological and ontological flaws

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<sup>9</sup>For one of the most extensive compilations on Mexico's 'national security' definitions see Sergio Aguayo Quezada & Bruce Michael Bagley, *En Búsqueda de la seguridad perdida: aproximaciones a la Seguridad Nacional Mexicana* (In Search of the Lost Security: Approximations to Mexico's National Security) Mexico: Editorial Siglo XXI, 1990. For an excellent historical review of the concept in Mexico see Raúl Benítez Manaut, "Sovereignty, foreign Policy and National Security in Mexico 1821-1989," in Hal Klepak (ed.) *Natural Allies? Canadian and Mexican Perspectives on International Security*, Ottawa: Carleton University Press & FOCAL, 1996. Regarding the resurgence of the use of 'national security' as a policy concept in Mexico see Olga Pellicer, "La Seguridad Nacional en México: Preocupaciones nuevas y nociones tradicionales," in Carlos Tello and Clark Reynolds, eds. *Las Relaciones Mexico-Estados Unidos, Mexico: FCE, 1981*.

<sup>10</sup>We refer particularly to the works on security by R.B.J. Walker, "Security, Sovereignty, and the Challenge of World Politics," *of. cit.*, Richard Ullman, "Redefining Security" *of. cit.*; Kenneth Prewitt, "Security Studies and the Social Sciences," in *Social Science Research Council Report, Annual Report, 1983-1984*, pp. xiii-xxv; Joseph Nye, Jr. & Sean M. Lynn-Jones, "International Security Studies: A Report of a Conference on the State of the Field," in *International Security*, 12 (4), 1988: 5-27; Stephen Walt, "The Renaissance of Security Studies," *International Studies Quarterly*, 35 (2), 1991: 211-40; Helga Haftendorn, "The Security Puzzle: Theory-Building and Discipline-Building in International Security," in *International Studies Quarterly* 35 (2), 1991: 3-17. Regarding the critiques and further developments of the need to redefine security studies see: Michael T. Klare & Daniel Thomas, eds., *World Security: Challenges for a New Century* (2nd. edition), New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994; Michael T. Klare, *Peace and World Security Studies*, (6th. edition) Boulder, Col.: Lynne Rienner, 1994.; Michael Clarke (ed.) *New Perspectives on Security*, London/New York: Brassey's (UK), The Centre for Defence Studies, 1993; Simon Dalby, "Contesting an Essential Concept: Dilemmas in Contemporary Security Discourse," in *Norman Paterson School of International Affairs Occasional Paper Series*, No. 6, 1994; James Der Derian and Michael Shapiro, "The Value of Security," In David Campbell and M. Dillon, (eds.), *The Political Subject of Violence*, Manchester (U.K.): Manchester University Press, 1992. & James Walker, "Security, Sovereignty, and the Challenge of World Politics," *Alternatives*, 15, 1990.

<sup>11</sup>Although not every critique of security studies contests the epistemology or ontology of realism in IR, in our thesis we will contest, for a better understanding of Mexico's security dilemmas, some conceptualizations on security and national security derived from 'classical' realism as well as the very influential Waltzian perspective of 'structure' depicted in Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, Reading MA: Addison-Wesley, 1979. On the other hand, although we concur with the traditional notion in the field that, at present, there is no effective common body of international governance, we differ with the epistemological underpinnings of such traditional insights. Such underpinnings have been dominated by a positivistic epistemology, or 'classical empiricism' represented by David Hume, that cannot accommodate and successfully explain two fundamental

that make them inadequate for a more comprehensive understanding of the security challenges confronted by most nation-states, their societies and individuals.

We therefore consider that the real challenges to Mexico's security challenges are not to be found in an apparently anarchical international system, but, as Robert Cox', understanding of world order suggests, in a set of domestic and transnational set of competing complexes of production relations, social forces and political and economic hegemonic projects. These complexes and their key agents have historically defined the dominant socioeconomic and political structures upon which the domestic and international orders lay.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, it is important that, without excluding external politico-military

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aspects of our object (s) of study: The first is an articulate definition of what constitutes the *intransitive objects of nature* (i.e. objects of which nature is beyond *just* human activity) and objects of a *transitive* nature (i.e. the set of paradigms, models and other methods of inquiry available to a particular 'epistemic community') or, as Roy Bhaskar clearly states in a *Realist Theory of Science* Sussex, GB: Harvester Press Ltd., 1978, "the artificial objects fashioned into items of knowledge by the science of the day" (p. 21).

<sup>12</sup>Regarding such structures, we are referring to the Gramscian and Historical Materialist perspective in International Relations theory first introduced by Robert Cox in "Gramsci, Hegemony and International Relations: An Essay in Method," *Millennium. Journal of International Studies* 12 (2) 1983: 162-75, as well as in his earlier work titled "Social Forces, States and World Orders: Beyond International Relations Theory," *Millennium. Journal of International Studies* 10 (2) 1981: 126-55. For our thesis, a very illustrative case study can be found in Robert O'Brien, "North American Integration and International Relations Theory," *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 28, No. 4, December 1995, pp. 693-724, in which the author uses the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) as an explanatory model on why economic integration, particularly in North America, does not respond to the same systemic pressures as that of the European case and hence cannot be explained thoroughly by neither 'classical', 'neo-realist' or a neo-institutionalised approach. He concludes, with historical references of the actors and forces engaged in such a process, that the Gramscian perspective in IR is a much better 'tool' to fully understand two particular issues: (1) the limits of both 'classical' and structural realism as well as institutionalism (expressed in functionalism, neofunctionalism and pluralism) to fully explain integration processes and regime-building and (2) the specific nature of the North American integration process. However, this does not mean that *specific concepts* derived from 'classical' realism, particularly regarding security issues generated by such integrating processes should be ignored. What has to be done is to redefine the former issues into a different kind of realist approach that as quoted earlier is based on 'scientific' or 'critical realism'.

threats, we redirect our focus toward the social forces and historical structures that internally and externally have influenced, since 1982, Mexico's dominant notions and policies regarding its national security.<sup>13</sup>

Thus, the direction of this thesis is both theoretical and empirical. It is theoretical in that it will attempt to review critically the epistemological and ontological underpinnings of the most influential notions of national security, and to present an alternative for our particular case study. For this purpose, we will attempt, through our literature review in Chapter Two to outline the fundamental notions and theoretical questions in security studies overall and national security studies in particular. We will also outline the relevant questions arising in Mexico's literature on its historical notions and practices of national security. In Chapter Three, we will explore the historical construction of the notion of 'national security' as it has been understood and applied particularly after the Second World War. We will then provide a suitable framework as a guide for explaining and redefining 'national security' in the Mexican context. In this, we will attempt to contrast the core assumptions of Realism and Structural-realism in IR with those of 'scientific' or 'critical realism'<sup>14</sup> and key Gramscian

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<sup>13</sup>By 'social forces' we mean, as in Robert Cox' work, those forces that are generated by the particular modes of production and corresponding state forms at domestic, regional and international levels. In this sense we can identify classes, unions, political parties, newly emerging non governmental organizations and dominant historical blocs in the Gramscian sense, as key forces that are in a constant struggle to keep or transform the domestic and international economic and political orders that sustain or challenge particular modes of production, security and state forms. For Cox' Gramscian framework of world orders see: Robert Cox, *Production, Power, and World Orders: Social Forces in the Making of History*, NY: Columbia University Press, 1987.

<sup>14</sup>As a challenge to the Humean understanding that our ideas of causality come down to just a matter of regular succession, continuity and patterns, and 'constant conjunction', see Roy Bhaskar *Scientific Realism and Human emancipation*, of. cit.; *Reclaiming Reality: A Critical Introduction to Contemporary Philosophy*, London: Verso, 1989; also Rom Harré *Varieties of Realism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986 and, Andrew Collier, *An Introduction to the Work of Roy Bhaskar*

assumptions in IR. For the analytical explanation of Mexico's state of political and economic dependency we will rely on key assumptions from some influential works of the Dependency school.

Regarding the Gramscian perspectives in IR, we shall consider particularly the works of Robert Cox, Stephen Gill, Enrico Augelli and Craig Murphy, Mark Rupert, and Giovanni Arrighi. From the Dependency school of thought we shall rely fundamentally on the works of André Gunder Frank, Octavio Ianni, Pablo González Casanova, Celso Furtado and Carlos Fazio.

The epistemological predisposition of the dissertation will centre upon: (1) the use of Critical Realism to re-evaluate key notions of 'classical realism', and (2) the Gramscian approach linked to a set of inter-subjective approaches, particular those regarding security and national security studies, such as in the works of Simon Dalby and R.B.J. Walker. The Gramscian perspective in IR will allow us to expand our levels of analysis and to take into consideration: (1) the dynamics and scope, within a specific historical moment, of the 'base' or structures of production of Mexico, the international system and the North American region; (2) the configuration, in a Gramscian sense, of the 'historic blocs' in Mexico and their transnational connections; (3) the specific principles, values, and ideological underpinnings of both the international and regional 'orders'; and (4) the particular interpretations of social actors regarding the legitimacy, consensus and divergencies of domestic and regional security regimes. In other words, without having to separate artificially the realms of politics, economics, culture and ideology, we are forced to understand in depth questions about

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London: Verso, 1994.

society, institutions such as the state or those developed at a regional or international level, that have an impact on the security of Mexico. On the other hand, the articulation between the Gramscian, the inter-subjective and 'critical realism' can give us a richer and more complex understanding of why and how nation-states develop (1) specific perceptions of threats and (2) particular understandings of *what* 'national security' is and for *who* it is for.

The dissertation is empirical. We will outline in Chapters Four and Five the key political events and the major socioeconomic indicators that, from 1982 until the 1994 Zapatista upheaval, generated a set of socioeconomic and political contradictions that have urged a reassessment of the objective and subjective threats to the security of the nation-state. In Chapter Four we will focus on the main economic and political policies that, through three successive presidential administrations since 1982, have created the objective conditions for reassessing Mexico's national security concerns, notions and practices. We will present a time-line of Mexico's economic performance going back at least to the early 1980s, to suggest correlations between these quantitative indices and the major trends and events of the period in the Mexican political economy, the international environment, and the ebb and flow of violence conflict and domestic insecurity.

In Chapter Five we will describe the particular socioeconomic and political struggles that, through history, have shaped the political and socioeconomic map of the southern state of Chiapas, from which the Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (EZLN) emerged. Finally, in Chapter Six we will depict, as result of the economic and political contradictions derived from the imposition of neoliberal policies, added to the region's own historical socioeconomic and political contradictions, the Zapatista upheaval. Moreover, we will

account for the movement's influence at the national level, in articulating the need to oppose such economic and political policies, and to redefine Mexico's national security notions and practices.

In Chapter Seven, the dissertation concludes with an attempt to show that for a nation-state like Mexico, whose political and economic autonomy has been declining at an alarming pace while social and political violence is rising at a dangerous rate, its national security challenges and doctrines have to be understood and developed beyond a linear understanding of causation and effect. Therefore, such challenges and doctrines have to be envisaged as a result of the dialectical relationships that have historically existed, at both a domestic and international level, between: the national and transnational complexes of production relations, classes, interest and ethnic groups, or, in a Gramscian sense, the *ensemble* of the contending 'historical bloc(s)'.<sup>15</sup>

Finally, because of the need to articulate the theoretical aspects of our framework with its prescriptive side, we will present a set of normative and practical policy guides which we hope answer the fundamental questions of this dissertation.

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<sup>15</sup>Gramsci describes the 'historical bloc' as the class(es) that link the structure with the superstructures (the realm of the economic with the political). He states in *Selections from Prison Notebooks*, New York: International Publishers, 1995 (12th printing from 1st 1971 ed.) that "structures and superstructures form an "historic bloc". That is to say the complex, contradictory and discordant *ensemble* of the superstructures is the reflection of the *ensemble* of the social relations of production." (p.366) Why ensemble? Gramsci takes this from Marx' Sixth Thesis in *Thesis on Feuerbach* in which he states that: "The human essence is no abstraction inherent in each single individual. In its reality it is the ensemble of social relations..." (op. cit. p. 352). In others words, every individual has a limit on his own will that is historically determined by his place in the *ensemble* of the social relations of production.

## Chapter II

### **'National Security' in International Relations: A Critical Review**

#### *Introduction*

Despite the inherently ambiguous nature of the notion of 'security', when we refer to it as 'national security', we can contemplate it as having concrete policy applications shaped by particular theoretical perspectives. Therefore, to have a more accurate understanding of both the objective and subjective (ideological) parameters of the concept of 'national security' it is essential that we carry out a critical review of the main perspectives in IR that have had a fundamental influence in the concept's formation and praxis.

#### *'National security' under the realm of Realism*

The discipline of International Relations has had as one of its fundamental *raison d'être* the study of the causes of conflict and war. It is a discipline that bears the memories of the First and Second World Wars in which questions such as the possibility of the total destruction of life itself arose. This hence has deeply permeated our understandings of the limits of the term 'security' and has divided the discipline into at least three main traditions of thought: the Hobbesian, or realist perspective, which views international politics as being in an anarchical 'state of war'; the Kantian or universalist/idealist tradition, which sees at work

in international politics a potential universal community of peoples; and a Grotian, or institutionalist perspective, which views international relations as taking place in an international society regulated and secured by principles, rules and norms.<sup>1</sup>

However, after the 'defeat' of the League of Nations, the unmatched ravages of the Second World War, and the global insecurity caused by a Cold War carried out with new technologies of mass destruction, the Realist perspective dominated studies of 'national security' issues. As a result, the main focus of the discipline shifted toward strategic studies and 'war games'. Notions like 'peace', therefore, were eclipsed by those pertaining to 'power politics'. International politics, as suggested by Hans Morgenthau, was "like all politics, a struggle for power."<sup>2</sup>

The philosophical underpinnings for such a dictum, which has permeated the overall Realists perspective, can be found, among others, in the core assumptions regarding human nature addressed in the philosophical dissertations of Western thinkers such as Thucydides, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Rousseau, Clausewitz, Weber and Carr.

In the *Peloponnesian War*, in which Thucydides chronicles the war between Athens and Sparta in the fifth century BC, are found the basic assumptions of the Realist perspective regarding the causes of conflict among nations. Thucydides stated that: "What made war inevitable was the growth of Athenian power and the fear which this caused in Sparta (i.e.,

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<sup>1</sup>For a classic study of order or disorder in world politics and the way the former has been defined through the three main perspectives see: Hedley Bull's *The Anarchical Society*, New York: Columbia University Press & Macmillan Ltd., 1977.

<sup>2</sup>Hans Morgenthau, *Politics Amongst Nations*, 4th edition New York: Knopf, 1966, p. 25.



the underlying cause of the war).<sup>3</sup> Therefore, for Thucydides the real cause was the fear provoked by a shift in the balance of power between Athens and Sparta. This observation has perpetuated the notion that nation-states are confronted with a constant dilemma: how to achieve an adequate level of security which did not, at the same time tip the balance of power by arousing fear in others? Although Thucydides' argument captured one cause of conflict, the idea of a 'balance of power' based on military considerations is insufficient to explain accurately all the factors that can cause conflicts among, and within, nation-states. Although Thucydides' core arguments do not have to be discarded —particularly those regarding the subjective nature of threats as causes of fear and conflict — they have to be understood through a much more complex methodology than the descriptive one, despite its factual precision.

In the struggle for power *and security*, individuals and nations are unquestionably confronted by their historical, sociological and geographic limits. Machiavelli understood the essence of this and mastered the descriptive and prescriptive policies to secure the power not just of the 'prince' but also of the new legal and political system that was developing in the late and early fifteen century: the state. One of the more debated aspects of Machiavelli's thesis is the notion that the security of the newly developed states was so important that it could justify certain acts by the prince proscribed to other individuals that did not carry the prince's responsibility. His work, which expresses a strong view of pragmatism, raised the image of those who hold the power of the state as the only actors capable to secure it vis a

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<sup>3</sup>See Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, trans. Rex Warner, New York: Penguin Books, 1982, p. 15.

vis an uncertain world ruled by the struggle for power. As he advised, regarding the pragmatic role of those who control the state:

Many have imagined republics and principalities which have never been seen or known to exist in reality; for how we live is so far removed from how we ought to live, that he who abandons what is done for what ought to be done, will rather learn to bring about his own ruin than his preservation. A man who wishes to make a profession in everything must necessarily come to grief among many who are not good.<sup>4</sup>

Although the ruler's responsibility for securing the state must justify some levels of pragmatism at particular conjunctures, Machiavelli went as far as to justify the use of any means in support of the *raison d'état* when he wrote that, "...a prince should make himself feared in such a way that, if he does not thereby merit love, at least he may escape odium, for being feared and not hated might go together. The prince may indeed attain this end if he but respect the property and the women of his subjects and citizens."<sup>5</sup>

However, if the limits of the discourse and practice of fear and, *mutatis mutandis*, 'national security' is determined by the politico-legal limits of individual property, we then have to understand, through a historical analysis, the socioeconomic bases upon which the politico-legal framework of property are founded. This means that 'security' and 'national security' have to be understood within a framework that takes into consideration the historical antagonisms that have divided polities between those who *have the right* of ownership over their own lives and the means to sustain it and those who *do not have* such

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<sup>4</sup>See Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince and the Discourses*, with an introduction by Max Lerner, New York: Modern Library, 1950, Chapter XV, p. 56.

<sup>5</sup>This quote is taken from Paul R. Viotti and Mark V. Kauppi, *International Relations Theory: Realism, Pluralism & Globalism*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co.: 1990, p. 87.

rights and whose security is disregarded. To understand the deeper nature of these antagonisms and their security consequences, we consider that a dialectical methodology can be more appropriate. Unfortunately Realists have applied almost in a literal fashion Machiavelli's prescriptive assumptions but have ignored dialectics in the explanation of the deeper causes of the historical underpinnings of Machiavelli's work.<sup>6</sup>

However, are 'uncertainty' and 'fear' just perceptions or objective and measurable conditions? For Hobbes, beyond the borders of the sovereign state, everything is in a 'state of war'. As he suggested:

“ . . . it is manifest, that during the time men live without a common power to keep them all in awe, they are in that condition which is called war; and such a war, as of every man, against every man. For WAR, consisteth not in battle only, or the act of fighting; but in a tract of time, wherein the will to contend but battle is sufficiently known: and therefore the notion of time, is to be considered in the nature of war; as it is in the nature of weather. For as the nature of foul weather, lieth not in a shower or two of rain; but in an inclination thereto of many days together: so the nature of war, consisteth not in actual fighting: but in the known disposition thereto, during all time there is no assurance to the contrary, all other time is peace.”<sup>7</sup>

This assumption has, in the words of Hobbes, interpreted the notion of 'national security' in a negative way. As he suggested:

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<sup>6</sup>For a contemporary description and analysis of how such perspective has been applied at the most cynical levels see: William Blum, *Killing Hope: US Military and CIA Interventions Since World War II*, 1995 edition.; William I. Robinson, *Promoting Polyarchy: Globalization, US Intervention and Hegemony*, Cambridge Studies in International Relations, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996; Kristopher Andrew & Oleg Gordievsky, *KGB: The Inside Story of its Foreign Operations from Lenin to Gorbachev*, London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1990, and Juan Corradi, Patricia Weiss Fagen & Manuel Antonio Garretón, *Fear at the Edge, State Terror and Resistance in Latin America*, of.cit., fn., no. 5.

<sup>7</sup>See Thomas Hobbes. *Leviathan*, of.cit., p. 113.

In all times, kings, and persons of sovereign authority, because of their independency, are in continual jealousies, and in the state and posture of gladiators, having their weapons pointing, and their eyes fixed on one another, that is, their forts, garrisons, and guns upon the frontiers of their kingdoms; and continual spies upon their neighbours, which is a posture of war.<sup>8</sup>

And, it is this particular perspective on the security of nation-states that has been at the core of the realist tradition in IR. Although the history of the sovereignty of nation-states has been developed largely through advances and “postures of war,”<sup>9</sup> this cannot be considered as a universal truth-claim because then the concept and practice of ‘national security’ might tend to be narrowed to its external and politico-military dimensions.

What is unquestionable is that *fear* and insecurity will always be present in conditions where social injustice prevails; however, it is not in the sovereignty of states that world orders have become permeated with injustices and therefore fear, but in the ways those who control the state have conceived and exercised their sovereignty as well that one of weaker states. Although the legal image of sovereignty refers to nation-states as equal, the social, economic

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 101.

<sup>9</sup>For a general overview of conflict and nation-state formation within its geopolitical dimensions see: Geoffrey Barraclough (ed.), *Times Atlas of World History*, London: Times Books, 1979. For the direct link between nation-state formation and war see: Victor Lee Burke, *The Clash of Civilizations: War Making and State Formation in Europe*, Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1997; Thomas Scheff, *Bloody Revenge: Emotions, Nationalism, and War*, Boulder, Col.: Westview Press, 1997; John Comaroff, *Perspectives on Nationalism and War*, New York: Gordon and Breach, 1995; Bruce Porter, *War and the Rise of the State: The Military Foundations of Modern Politics*, New York: Free Press, 1994; Peter Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, Theda Skocpol, *Bringing the State Back In*, Cambridge, UK/New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985; Norbet Elias, *State Formation and Civilization*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1982; and the classic works of Dona Torr (ed.) *Marxism, Nationality, and War: A Textbook in Two Parts*, London: Lawrence & Wishaut, 1940; Edward B. Krehbiel, *Nationalism, War and Society: A Study of Nationalism and its Concomitant, War, in their Relation to Civilization; and the Fundamentals and the Progress of the Opposition to War*, New York: The Macmillan Co., 1916, and André N. Constantin, *Le role sociologique de la guerre et le sentiment national*, Paris: Alcan, 1907.

and political realities, understood through a historical perspective, have proven the opposite.

This does not necessarily mean that states are no longer the more prominent actors when it comes to security, but it is perhaps in the historical conditions of their politico-economic relationships, often based on an unequal and unjust set of international 'modes of production', 'regimes of accumulation' and 'modes of security' where a great part of uncertainty and *fear* reside.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, security is not, as the realist will presume, found only in 'balancing power' among states, but in changing at both a domestic and international level the politico-economic conditions of *uncertainty* and *fear*. It is not, therefore, within a particular level (in the Structural Realist sense)<sup>11</sup> that the causes of fear and conflicts are to be found, but in the dialectical relationship among different social forces that are in a constant struggle to reproduce or transform such conditions. Yet as we will attempt to prove through our case study, we can only understand such dialectical relationships if we first divest the state of its so called rational and unitary cloak and secondly reevaluate the epistemological underpinnings of Realism.

However, if politics and conflict continue to be understood as Clausewitz saw them,

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<sup>10</sup>Regarding the debate of the impact of such inequalities and the 'security' of states see: Joel Migdal, *Strong States and Weak States: State-Society Relations and State Capabilities in the Third World*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988; Michael Handel, *Weak States in the International System*, London: Cass, 1981, Peter Evans; Dietrich Rueschemeyer, Theda Skocpol, *Bringing the State Back In*, op cit.; Klaus Knorr and Frank N. Trager (eds), *Economic Issues and National Security*, Kansas: Lawrence Press of Kansas, 1977. and, R. W Tucker, *The Inequality of Nations*, London: Martin Robertson Press, 1977.

<sup>11</sup>See Kenneth Waltz, *Man, the State and War*, op. cit. as well as Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, New York: Random House, 1979.

then war and security will almost continue being synonyms. In his assumption that war “is a continuation of political activity by other means”<sup>12</sup> he equates the concept and practice of ‘national security’ with ‘politico-military strategy’.<sup>13</sup> And, as we will further show, it is such politico-military notions of national security that have prevailed in the Realist school of IR.

The First and Second World Wars overshadowed the notions of security based on a Grotian or even Kantian perspectives. Before World War II began, Carr’s understandings of world politics began to occupy the minds of political thinkers and, with no lack of concrete justifications, eclipsed those of the idealists such as Norman Angell, G. Lowes Dickinson and, Alfred Zimmern.<sup>14</sup> Yet although Carr agreed with some of Hobbes’ core views regarding the nature of international politics, he did not totally dismiss utopian principles. What he disregarded were the ethno-centric and extremely individualistic foundations of some Utopians in explaining the causes and solutions of conflict. As Carr writes:

Any sound political thought must be based on elements of both utopia [i.e., values] and reality [i.e., power]. Where utopianism had become hollow and intolerable sham, which serves mainly as a disguise for the interests of the privileged,

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<sup>12</sup>See Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976, p. 87.

<sup>13</sup>Regarding the influence of the politico-military determinism of Clausewitz views regarding “security” see Michael Howard’s article, “The Forgotten Dimension of Strategy”, *Foreign Affairs*, 57, NO. 5 (Summer 1979): 975-86. Also see Peter Paret, “The Genesis of *On War*”, Michael Heard, “The Influence of Clausewitz,” and Bernard Brodie, “The Continuing Relevance of On War,” all in Howard and Paret’s edition of *On War*, op. cit. pp. 3-58. For a criticism of the dominance of “strategic” studies regarding “security” see: Barry Buzan, *People, States & Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era* (2d. edition), 1991.

<sup>14</sup>For some of the most important works that were written within the so called Utopian phase of International Relations see: See G. Lowes Dickinson, *Causes of International War*, London: The Swarthmore Press Ltd., 1929; Norman Angell, *The Great Illusion*, New York: GP Putnam's Sons, edition from 1938; Alfred Zimmern, *The League of Nations and the Rule of Law, 1918-1935*, New York: Russell & Russell, 1939 ed. & 1969 ed.

the realist platform performs an indispensable service in unmasking it. But pure realism can offer nothing but a naked struggle for power which makes any kind of international society impossible.<sup>15</sup>

The Utopian or Idealist phase in International Relations was based on: (1) a philosophical synthesis of the eighteenth century Enlightenment concept of 'progress'; (2) nineteenth century Rational Liberalism and Positivism, and (3) the principles of Wilsonian idealism. Although the ideals of some Utopians were praiseworthy, they were never detached from particular national interests and were not grounded in profound understandings of the nations and regions that were beyond their own geopolitical sphere.<sup>16</sup> They believed that interdependence based on free trade and 'collective security' would enhance 'progress', understood as peace and security.<sup>17</sup> Regarding the essence of interdependence and security Angell stated that: "A realization of interdependence—even though it may be subconscious is the basis of the social sense, the feeling and tradition which make possible a democratic society in which freedom is voluntarily limited for the purpose of having any freedom at

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<sup>15</sup>Edward Hallet Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919-1939*, London: Macmillan and Co., 1962. p. 93.

<sup>16</sup>For a study of the more complex and particular interests of the Wilsonian 'idealism' see: David M. Esposito, *The Legacy of Woodrow Wilson: American Aims in World War I*, Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1996. And for a very critical review of Anglo-American idealism see: Marat Antiasov, *Panamericanismo: Doctrina y Hechos*, Translated to Spanish by J. Bogdan, Moscow: Editorial Progreso, 1981.

<sup>17</sup>For a contemporary expression of liberalism/idealism in the formation of 'progress' as being equated to peace and security see: Emanuel Adler & Beverly Crawford, *Progress in Postwar International Relations* (eds.), New York: Columbia University Press, 1991 (see in this volume particularly Emanuel Adler's article, "Seasons of Peace: Progress in Postwar International Security", pp. 128-174.

all.”<sup>18</sup> And this, as Angell suggested could only be achieved in world politics by a common purpose of security. He would state that “It is certain as anything can be, that men cannot protect their own interests effectively unless they are prepared to defend the interest of others, that is to say, the law which protects others.”<sup>19</sup>

Carr responded that “the exercise of power always appears to beget the appetite for more power.”<sup>20</sup> Conflict for Carr, even if it were at first an act of defence to secure one's interest, unfortunately always ended in a war of aggression in which ‘to secure’ becomes a sheer act of power and belligerence.

Therefore, for Realists, international politics takes place, in a Rousseauian sense,<sup>21</sup> between self-interested nations that can only be secure if a ‘balance of power’ exists between them. Thus, for Realists ‘national security’ is found through the ‘balance of power’ between self-interested actors in which the more ‘capable’ will not only keep the so called ‘international system’ in balance but also enhance at least *their* security and guarantee some ‘stability’ for the ‘others’. Regarding this assumption Kenneth Waltz stated that

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<sup>18</sup>Norman Angell, *The Great Illusion*, 1938 edition, Op. Cit. p. 256. Also see Jaap de Wilde, *Saved from Oblivion: Interdependence Theory in the First Half of the 20th Century: A Study on the Causality Between War and Complex Interdependence*, Aldershoth, Hampshire UK/ Brookfield, Vermont, USA: Dartmouth Publishing Co., 1991

<sup>19</sup>Ibid. p. 281.

<sup>20</sup>Edward Hallett Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, 1919-1939, op.cit., p. 112.

<sup>21</sup>For a realist interpretation of Rousseau's analogy of the ‘stag hunt’ see Stanley Hoffmann, *Contemporary Theory in International Relations*, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1960, and his article “Balance of Power”, in *International Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences*, ed. By David I. Sills, NY: Macmillan and Free Press, 1968. Regarding the analogy's application to the levels of analysis in explaining conflicts see Kenneth N. Waltz, *Man, the State and War: A Theoretical Analysis*, NY: Columbia University Press, 1959.



In the midst of roughly equal states, competition is intense and the balancing process intricate. Thus among the Greek and Italian city-states and among the European nation-states, any state threatening to outstrip the others in power could expect that an attempt would be made to check it. And this was the case not because they enjoyed the process of checking each other, but because for each state its power relation to other states is ultimately the key to its survival.<sup>22</sup>

To fully understand this point, we have to go back to the Weberian understanding of the state as an entity that not only has the legitimate monopoly of the use of force but that, through the rational construction of the state bureaucracy becomes: (1) An independent actor vis a vis 'civil society', sometimes government itself, and other states; (2) a unitary entity encompassing the interests of the nation-state as whole; and (3) a rational, self-interested actor.<sup>23</sup>

It is important to stress that despite their ontological differences, Realists and Grotians have shared an epistemology based on a positivist understanding of science. International relations, therefore, can supposedly be explained through the same paradigms as are applied in the 'natural' or 'hard' sciences. As a result of this, both perspectives have left out any methodology based on dialectic or holistic epistemologies.<sup>24</sup> Likewise, they essentially share and enhance the same core philosophical underpinnings of eighteenth and nineteenth century

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<sup>22</sup>Kenneth Waltz, *Man, the State and War: A Theoretical Analysis*, op. cit. p. 210.

<sup>23</sup>For his particular understanding of 'state rationality' see: Max Weber, *Economy and Society*, vol. III, New York: Bedminster Press, 1968, p. 987.

<sup>24</sup>For an excellent review on the lack of dialectical methodologies in IR see: Christian Heine and Benno Teschke, "Sleeping Beauty and the Dialectical Awakening: On the Potential of Dialectic for International Relations," *Millenium*, Summer 1996, Vol. 25, No. 2, pp. 399-425

**Liberalism.**<sup>25</sup> The articulation of the positivist and liberal underpinnings in the dominant perspectives in IR has led to a conception of states as rational and unitary actors whose actions (conceived in Realism as self-interested) can be studied with the principles of 'hard' sciences. This assumption can be clearly observed in the following suggestion advanced by Waltz:

Given a sufficient number of players engaged in a competitive game, Von Neumann and Morgenstern demonstrate with convincing mathematical rigour the possible advantages of combinations among them. The clever player will be on watch for a chance to increase his gains or cut his loses by cooperating with another. Similarly in international politics, so long the participants do not consider themselves players of a game in which all concentrate on production and non worries about distribution, states will ever be tempted to form coalitions for the simple reason that those who combine acquire an advantage over those who do not . . . The cardinal rule of the game is often taken to be: Do whatever you must in order to win it. <sup>26</sup>

Such rational and unitary actors will be, particularly for Realism, constrained to pursue a 'national security' practice, 'balancing their power' by projecting their military and other capabilities. As Waltz states, "in international politics there is no authority effectively able to prohibit the use of force, the balance of power among states becomes a balance of capabilities, including physical force, that states chose to use in pursuing their goals."<sup>27</sup>

Thus, Realists have understood the notion of 'national security' as a goal that can only be achieved by states that, with the exercise of their various capabilities, can

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<sup>25</sup>For the articulation between Realism and Liberalism see: Robert Gilpin, "The Richness of the Tradition of Political Realism," *International Organization*, Spring 1984, Vol. 38, No. 2, pp. 287-304.

<sup>26</sup>Kenneth Waltz, *Man, the State and War*, op. cit., p. 204.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid.

*strategically* adapt and ‘convey’ adequate levels of ‘stability’ to a ‘structure’ that apparently has a nature of its own, which is that of anarchy<sup>28</sup>. As a result of this assumption, from its genesis, the influential literature on ‘national security’ was developed around the concept of ‘balance of power’.<sup>29</sup>

Likewise, it is important to note that most studies on ‘national security’ have emerged in response to the security necessities of the United States. Those necessities had to do not only with the apparent ‘constraints’ of an ‘anarchical structure’ but with the development of a ‘world order’ that, after the World War II, was essentially shaped by the United States. This ‘order’, or ‘hegemonic project’, entailed not only the reconstruction of Europe but also a direct challenge to the Soviet Union as the leading representative of socialism. As a result

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<sup>28</sup>For the most influential work on the ‘nature’ of the international structure in Realism see: Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*. New York: Random House, 1979.

<sup>29</sup>For some very influential works on ‘national security’ and the ‘balance of power’ see: N. Spykman, *America's Strategy in World Politics: The United States and the Balance of Power*, New York: Harper and Row, 1942; Bernard Brodie, *The Absolute Weapon*, New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1946; —., *Strategy in the Missile Age*, Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1959; —., *War and Politics*, New York: Macmillan, 1973; Henry Kissinger, *Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy*, New York: Harper and Row, 1957; Richard E. Osgood, *Limited War: The Challenge to American Strategy*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957; TC Schelling, *The Strategy of Conflict*, Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1960; Samuel Huntington, *The Common Defence: Strategic Programs and National Politics*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1961; S. Huntington, "The Renewal of Strategy," In *The Strategic Imperative: New Policies for American Security*, edited by S. Huntington, pp. 1-52, Cambridge, MA: Cambridge Ballinger Publishing, 1982; Gene Lyons & Louis Morton, *Schools for Strategy: Education and Research in National Security Affairs*, New York: Praeger, 1965; Raymond Aron, *The Great Debate: Theories of Nuclear Strategy*, trans. Ernest Pawel, New York: Doubleday, 1965; —., "The Evolution of Modern Strategic Thought," *Problems of Modern Strategy: Part One, Adelphi Papers No. 54* (London: Institute of Strategic Studies, February 1969): 9; Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981; John Mearsheimer, "Back to the Future: Instability in Europe After the Cold War," *International Security* 15: 55-56.

of this, the international politico-military order was essentially a bipolar one 'locked' in a state of Mutual Assured Destruction. This 'order' neglected other issues and perspectives regarding 'national security' or considered them when they directly affected the politico-military balance between the world powers.<sup>30</sup> Thus, with most of Europe, Latin America and the Pacific under the umbrella of United States military and politico-economic control, the apparently 'contested'<sup>31</sup> conceptualization of 'national security' was essentially shaped by Realist perspectives developed in the US. The same occurred in the hegemonic sphere of the USSR.<sup>32</sup> One result of such a bipolar 'world order' has been an 'ethnocentrism' in the concept of 'national security', flowing particularly from its Anglo-American origin.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup>Perhaps one of the most influential papers within the realist perspective that considered the broadening of the "security" or more precisely "strategic" agenda of the US was Henry Kissinger's report titled "A New National Partnership," *Department of State Bulletin*, 72 (February 17, 1976) in which he stated that, "progress in dealing with the traditional agenda is no longer enough. A new and unprecedented kind of issue has emerged. The problems of energy, resources, environment, pollution, the uses of space and the seas now rank with questions of military security, ideology, and territorial rivalry which have traditionally made up the diplomatic agenda." p. 199.

<sup>31</sup>For one of the most influential analysis of the concept of 'national security' see: Arnold Wolfers, *Discord and Collaboration*, Baltimore: MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1962. This volume of essays contains the author's classic essay, "National Security as an Ambiguous Symbol," on the vagueness and contested moral judgments inherent in the concept of national security. The normative proposition that nations must give priority to security must be judged by: (1) the values being protected; (2) the sacrifices required by the level of security desired; and (3) the means used.

<sup>32</sup>Regarding one of the classic works on the Soviet's understanding of 'national security' and its influence on most socialist countries see: D. Tomashevski, *Politica Exterior de la URSS y Relaciones Internacionales: Las Ideas Leninistas y las Relaciones Internacionales Contemporaneas* (USSR's Foreign Policy and IR: the Ideas of Lenin and Contemporary International Relations) (Spanish version translated by M. Jusianov), Moscow: Editorial Progreso, 1974.

<sup>33</sup>For a criticism of the ethnocentric views of 'international security' and particularly of 'national security' see: Ken Booth, *Strategy and Ethnocentrism*, London: Croom Helm, 1979.

*From Realism to Neo-Institutionalism or toward an expanded agenda for Realism?*

During the Cold-War, and particularly after the decline of US hegemony,<sup>34</sup> the Anglo-American vision of a universal ‘world order’ (i.e., free trade and worldwide democracy *à l’américaine*) developed, through an articulation of structural realism and the Grotian perspective, a *Neo-institutionalist* approach to international politics. This perspective saw in the higher levels of economic and political interdependence a need to reinforce international regimes as to establish reasonable levels of international stability and therefore of ‘national security’.<sup>35</sup> However, this perspective, when linked to Structural Realism still insists on the need for a strong leadership derived from the politico-military power of those nation-states that have established and sustained the predominant international or regional regimes. This reflects an almost nostalgic call for the return of US world hegemony,

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<sup>34</sup>For an excellent overview of the causes of US relative hegemonic decline as understood from different International Political Economy perspectives see chapters Three and Ten from Robert Gilpin, *The Political Economy of International Relations*, NJ: Princeton, University Press, 1987; For a Marxist perspective on US hegemonic decline see: Robert Cox, *Production, Power, and World Order: Social Forces in the Making of History*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1987. For a Realist response to the idea of US decline see Samuel Huntington, “The US—Decline or Renewal?” *Foreign Affairs* 67: 76-96.

<sup>35</sup>For an overview of the main debates regarding the nature of international regimes see Stephen D. Krasner (ed.), *International Regimes*, Ithaca, NY/London/UK: Cornell University Press, 1983. For what has been perhaps the most influential work that articulates structural realism and the institutionalist approach see Robert Keohane, “The Theory of Hegemonic Stability and Changes in International Economic Regimes, 1967-1977,” in *Change in the International System*, edited by O.R. Holsti, R.M. Siverson, and A. George, pp. 131-62. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1980;—. *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984;—. *International Institutions and State Power: Essays in International Relations Theory*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1989; and R. Keohane and J. Nye, *Power and Interdependence*, 2nd edition. Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman, 1989.

particularly regarding the politico-military aspects of such leadership.<sup>36</sup>

Despite the importance of regimes and institutions, however, from this perspective, responsibility for the security and stability of regimes, and hence national security rests, in the last instance, on what Robert Jervis sees as the specific “will of ‘great powers’”.<sup>37</sup> The problem with this assumption is that it expresses a voluntaristic approach in which the state is still conceived as a ‘unitary’ and ‘rational’ actor. Although the inclusion of political economy with the acknowledgment of other actors, and therefore the expansion of ‘national security’ agendas, makes this perspective better equipped to understand the complexities involved in national security issues, it is based on an epistemology that unfortunately does not take into consideration some fundamental aspects of both national and international politics. Although most of the Grotian tradition in IR has been based on a strong belief in the bounding powers of legality and the development of political, military and economic integration processes,<sup>38</sup> it has not developed into a perspective that considers history and political economy from a dialectical perspective. Therefore, we only have a partial view of the dynamics of the economic and political bases that support, or transform, the politico-legal structures of international regimes. Regarding specifically security issues Helga Haftendorn

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<sup>36</sup>See Joseph Nye, *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power*, USA: Basic Books, 1991.

<sup>37</sup>See Robert Jervis, “Cooperation Under the Security Dilemma,” *World Politics* 30(2): 167-214, and,—, “Security Regimes,” pp. 173-95, in Stephen Krasner (ed) *International Regimes*, Ithaca/London: Cornell University Press, 1983.

<sup>38</sup>Regarding the legal aspects of such perspective particularly related to security see: Julius Stone, *Legal Control of International Conflict*, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1959; Richard Falk, *Legal Order in a Violent World*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1968; Karl Deutsch and Stanley Hoffmann (eds.), *The Relevance of International Law*, NY: Doubleday, 1971.

suggests that:

Our expectations are that institutionalism may yield answers to questions that realism and idealism could not provide . . . A new paradigm of security should meet the following demands: 1) it should explain diversity and change—differences in various regions, transition from one dominant concept to another, systems transformation; 2) it should be multi focussed, not limited to a single issue-area or level of analysis.<sup>39</sup>

Although we agree with Haftendom's project for a new paradigm of security focussed on 'diversity and change' as well as an expansion of issue-areas, we are not offered an alternative way of developing the knowledge to explain the complexities of such diverse issue-areas. We are therefore presented with a quantitative change in the way 'national security' can be analysed but are unfortunately confronted with a limiting change in the qualitative aspects as how to go further in our understanding and praxis of 'national security'.

Whatever the politico-legal similarities of nation-states at the international level, we have to understand the specific objective and subjective elements that have influenced the development of their particular 'national interests'<sup>40</sup> and 'national security' regimes. However, because of the strong influence of the Weberian interpretation of the state, the concept and praxis of 'national security' have been narrowed through the acceptance of debatable assumptions of 'legitimate monopoly of power by the state'. As a result from this

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<sup>39</sup>Helga Haftendom, "The Security Puzzle: Theory-Building and Discipline-Building in International Security," *op.cit.*, p. 12.

<sup>40</sup>For the historical and philosophical bases of the development of the 'national interests' in the Western world see Donald E. Nuechterlein, "The Concept of 'National Interest': A Time for New Approaches," in *Orbis*, Vol. 23, no. 1, (Spring 1979): pp. 73-93; and Jutta Weldes, "Constructing National Interests," in *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 2, no. 3 (September 1996): pp. 275-319.

perspective—which permeates both realism and neo-institutionalism—the role and nature of the social forces at a domestic and international level that have helped shape the notions and praxes of ‘national security’ are concealed or considered as independent from the state.

When, however, the Weberian notion of the state is confronted with increasingly complex domestic and world ‘orders’ in which the core politico-legal bases that give the state its autonomy are perceived as irrelevant or ‘outdated’<sup>41</sup>, a redefinition of its epistemological basis becomes imperative. Why? Because concepts such as ‘sovereignty’ or the ‘self-determination of peoples’, which are key to the notion and practice of ‘national security’, have been eroded, particularly for less independent and more vulnerable nation-states.

*Expanding the agenda of ‘national security’ or redefining its epistemological underpinnings?*

A major result of confronting more complex domestic and world ‘orders’ is that it compels us to ask for *whom* and for *what* is ‘national security’. As a response to these questions two avenues can be chosen. The first is to expand the issue-areas and the levels of analysis. The second is to focus on the redefinition of the epistemological and ontological underpinnings of the notion of ‘national security’.

Regarding the first avenue, it was not a mere coincidence that, parallel to the decline

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<sup>41</sup>For an excellent analysis on the debates generated by the actual questioning of the relevance or irrelevance of ‘sovereignty’ in the actual world order see: Joseph A. Camilleri and Jim Falk, *The End of Sovereignty? The Politics of a shrinking and Fragmented World*, Aldershot Hants, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing Ltd., 1992.



of US economic power during the 1970s, new questions regarding the scope of both 'international' and 'national' security rose among influential decision-makers and scholars.<sup>42</sup> Although particular political and economic policies played a determining role in the development of the post World War II security regimes, they were considered as backups to the military aspects centred on the 'national security' of key states for both the US and USSR hegemonic projects. This hierarchy of issue-areas in which politico-military aspects were at the top of 'national security' agendas was particularly stressed by the Anglo-American realist school of IR.<sup>43</sup>

However, after the 1973 oil crisis, in the development of 'national security' agendas, economic and environmental concerns began to be considered as important as military issues.

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<sup>42</sup>Perhaps the most influential voice in advising a change, at least regarding the US foreign policy agenda, was Henry Kissinger when he stated the necessity to include economic matters as part of the 'national security' concerns of the US. For his suggestion see fn. No. 43. Likewise, regarding the need to push for the economic dimensions of 'security' see the Winter 1975 issue of *International Organization* in which F. Bergsten, R. Keohane, and J. Nye's introductory essay addresses the declining utility of force relative to the increasing utility of power and lists "economic security" as one objective in international politics. On the other hand, Krause and Nye's concluding essay provides an expanded discussion of "collective economic security". And finally, a chapter by F. Holzman and R. Legvold examines economic and political reasons for ameliorating East-West relations.

<sup>43</sup>Although Carr's realist analysis of international relations—which considered political economy as one inseparable component of international politics—was highly praised in the US, it was Morgenthau's view, which removed the economic dimension of international politics, that dominated such perspective. Regardless of Waltz's analogy between economics and politics in explaining the nature of his international structure, the use of the former is only for methodological reasons, for it is absolute power that matters. Perhaps the most influential literature, within such a perspective, regarding the economic dimensions of US 'national security' are: Bernard Brodie, "National Security Policy and Economic Stability," *Memorandum no. 33*, New Haven: Yale Institute of International Studies, January 2, 1950; John L. Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War, 1941-1947*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1972; —, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1982; Klaus Knorr, *Military Power and Potential*, Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath and Co., 1970; Klaus Knorr & Frank Trager, *Economic Issues and National Security*, Lawrence, Kansas: Published for the National Security Education Program by Regent Press of Kansas, 1977. George A. Lincoln, William S. Stone, and Thomas H. Harvey, *Economics and National Security*, New York: Prentice Hall, 1950.

These concerns brought authors like Richard Ullman, Jessica Tuchman Mathews, Theodore Moran, Brad Roberts, Myron Weiner, and Beverly Crawford, among others, to rethink the scope of international and national security.<sup>44</sup>

The main focus of their work has been to identify a new set of threats particularly faced by Western industrialized nation-states: issues such as the environment, immigration, drug trafficking, and human rights. However, these studies have proved very limited for explaining the more complex causes of such issues. The reasons for this can be found in a very ethnocentric understanding of national security with a limited epistemology that does

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<sup>44</sup>See Richard Ullman, "Redefining Security," in *International Security* (1983) 8: 129-53; Jessica M. Tuchman, "Redefining Security," in *Foreign Affairs* (1989) 68: 162-77; Theodore C. Sorensen, "Rethinking National Security," *Foreign Affairs* (1990) no. 3: 1-18; Theodore Moran, "International Economics and National Security," *Foreign Affairs* (1990/91) 69: 74-90; Brad Roberts, "Human Rights and International Security," *Washington Quarterly* (1990) 13: 65-75; Myron Weiner, "Security, Stability and International Migration," *International Security* (1992/92) 17: 91-126; Beverly Crawford, "The New Security Dilemmas under International Economic Interdependence," *Millennium* (1994), 23: 25-55. For a good synthesis of such debate see: Joseph Nye and Sean Lynn-Jones, "International Security Studies: A Report of a Conference on the State of the Field," in *International Security* (1988) 12: 5-27, and, for a more contemporary critical review see: Keith Krause and Michael C. Williams, "Broadening the Agenda of Security Studies: Politics and Methods," in *Mershon International Studies Review* (1996) 40: 229-254. Regarding specific issues within this debate see: Jessica Tuchman Mathews (ed.) *Preserving the Global Environment: The Challenge of Shared Leadership*, New York/London: W.W. Norton & Co. 1991; Norman Myers, "Environment and Security," *Foreign Policy* (1989) ns. 73-76: 23-41; Gareth Porter, "Environmental Security as a National Security Issue," *Current History* (May 1995): 218-22; Thomas Homer-Dixon, "On the Threshold: Environmental Changes as Causes of Acute Conflict," *International Security* (1991) no. 16: 76-116; —. "Environmental Scarcities and Violent Conflict: Evidence From Cases," *International Security* (1994) no. 19: 5-40; Marc A. Levy, "Is the Environment a National Security Issue?" *International Security* (1995) no. 2: 35-62. For a comprehensive review of this debate see: Thomas F. Homer Dixon & Marc A. Levy, "Correspondence: Environment and Security," *International Security* (1995/96) no. 3: 189-198; Patricia Mische, "Ecological Security and the Need to Reconceptualize Sovereignty," in *Alternatives* (1989)no. 14: 389-427. Also see: Barry Buzan, "Environment as a Security Issue," article for the Conference on Environmental Security, Université Laval, Québec, 28-30 September, 1990. Regarding Drug Trafficking see: Rensselar W. Lee, "Global Reach: The Threat of International Drug Trafficking," in *Current History* (May 1995): 207-11. And for ethnic conflicts see: Daniel Patrick Moynihan, *Pandaemonium: Ethnicity in International Politics*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991 and David Lake and Donald Rothchild, "Containing Fear: The Origins and Management of Ethnic Conflict," *International Security* (1996) no. 2: 41-72.

not take into consideration the social, political, economic and environmental contradictions of the systems of economic development that are 'protected' by existing notions of national security. Problems with such a limited conceptualization and praxis of 'national security' become even more acute when such notions are transposed to other nation-states that are less developed economically and are extremely vulnerable to the economic and political shifts that take place in the major centres that influence the regional and world 'orders'. Thus, if we want to achieve a more accurate understanding of 'national security' than what Realism or Neo-institutionalism can offer us, we will need to proceed with the following considerations:

- A continuation of the expansion of issue-areas.
- A multiplication of levels of analysis.
- A more comprehensive epistemology that understands the more complex nature of the socioeconomic aspects that make up the social and individual levels of international and national security.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>45</sup>Regarding particularly the individual and social levels, the studies on security have been fundamentally divided between those concerned with : a) The correlation between economic development and human security; b) the diverse aspects of the so called "universal human rights" vis a vis specific cultural dimensions of such rights; and c) those that have specifically focussed on gender issues. Some of the core works regarding the former are: a) United Nations Development Program. "Redefining Security: The Human Dimension", in *Human Development Report, 1994.*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1994; Jorge Nef, "Governability, Governance and Human Security: A Conceptual Framework for the Comparative Study of Structural Adjustment Policies in Latin America," in *Research in Progress Series 2* (Spring 1993): 123-140;— *Human Security and Mutual Vulnerability: An Exploration into the Global Political Economy of Development*, Ottawa: International Development Research Centre, 1995;— "New Partnership for Development": No Peace and Security Without Development", *UN Chronicle* (June 1992): 67-70; b) Brad Roberts, "Human Rights and International Security," in *Washington Quarterly* (1990) no.13: 65-7; Robert Rubenstein, "Cultural Analysis and International Security," in *Alternatives* (1988) no. 13: 529-542; and, c) Ann J. Tickner, *Gender and International Relations: Feminist Perspectives on Achieving Global Security*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1992; and, Rebecca Grant, "The Quagmire of Gender and International Security," in *Gendered States*, Edited by Spike Peterson, pp. 83-97, Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1992.

- A more adequate notion of 'national security' to explain the particular problems facing Less Developed Countries or those which do not share, or which directly oppose, the models of development promoted by the highly industrialized capitalist nation-states.

*A notion of 'national security' for the Third World or the Less Developed Countries?*

Although the concept of 'national security' was originally coined *in and for* highly industrialized states considered to be 'strong states' in the sense of having higher levels of internal political and social cohesion and stability,<sup>46</sup> qualifiers as 'strong' or 'weak' do not help us much in understanding the complexities of nation-states and their particular notions and praxes of national security. What is important to underline is that, despite the nature and importance of the state as a politico-legal institution with variable levels of autonomy —and in some cases with a 'legitimate monopoly of power'— our focus of national security cannot be reduced only to the defence of such institutions but must concern the nation as a whole. The defence, therefore, of a particular nation, understood in its sociological and juridical dimensions, is not always equal to the defence of particular politico-legal institutions. Although this does not imply, in a strict sense, that the nation is always above the state —for the latter is intricately linked to the former — it does imply, for the purposes of a more articulate understanding of the complexities regarding the concept of 'national security', a

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<sup>46</sup>For a good review of the debate between 'national security' vis a vis 'strong' and weak' states see Barry Buzan, "National Security and the Nature of the State," in Barry Buzan, *People, States and Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies*, op.cit., pp. 57-107.

clear differentiation between the historical and ideological nature of the nation and that of the state.

Unfortunately, even the literature on 'national security', that has accepted the expansion of issues and levels of analysis has continued to focus on mainly two of the aspects of security: (1) as a tool devised mainly for external threats and, (2) its reduction to the defence of the state perceived as unitary and rational.<sup>47</sup> The stress on these two dimensions—fundamental to the post World War II order—have ignored the more complex nature and sources of the threats which now have to be faced. Such threats that can be found internally have to be dealt with not only by the state apparatus (which can sometimes be the cause of such threats) but by also other actors and social forces that compose the *nation* at large. This means, therefore, that the security of a nation-state has to be conceived and practised not just by the state apparatus but by other political and social structures that, while not always directly related to the state apparatus, are legally and politically bound to the nation. This is clear in the national security concerns of the so-called Third World or Less Developed Countries.

In the study of national security in the Third World, or in the LDCs, there is a complexity of analysis that is not always found in studies of highly industrialized countries, or 'strong states'. A reason is that when "strong states" are considered, the more intricate social and political complexities of their societies are taken for granted based on a perception

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<sup>47</sup>For the evolution of the concept and the expansion of issues to be considered as part of the agenda of the former's agenda see: Robert Mandel, *The Changing Face of National Security: A Conceptual Analysis*, Westport/ Connecticut/ London: Greenwood Press, Contributions in Military Studies Number 156, 1994. Also see Barry Buzan, *People, States and Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era*, op.cit.

of higher internal stability or national cohesion. On the other hand, some key dimensions of nation-states have been taken for granted, particular by structural realists, because it is believed that their politico-military capabilities cannot influence the international structure.

One of the pioneering works that has developed a more complex approach for explaining some security problems of the Third World is Stephen Krasner's *Structural Conflict: The Third World Against Global Liberalism* (1985). His work, which is based on a liberal ideology and structural realism, reflects the tensions between a 'North' that has pushed for Liberalism on a global scale and a 'South' that has, at least during the 1970s, presented a common front (based according to Krasner on authoritarian regimes) against it. Although his work is very ideological and quite ethnocentric, it does include a complex analysis of the political and social factors that underpin the major policies of the states he uses in his case studies.<sup>48</sup> As well, it shows that, particularly during the 1970s, there was a clear and open confrontation between two differing projects of development that, through the development of regional or international initiatives such as the New International Economic Order (NIEO) and international cartels such as the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) exercised political pressures to control the security dimension of their resources. However, such a confrontation was not, as seen through the eyes of Realists, an act of 'balance of power' between a 'stronger' and more 'democratic' North and an 'authoritarian' and 'weak' South. This confrontation, understood through a more complex perspective, reflected opposing views of what are the fundamental *threats* to the security of

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<sup>48</sup>Stephen Krasner, *Structural Conflict: The Third World Against Liberalism*, Berkeley, CAL/England, London: University of California Press, 1985.

some nation-states from Latin America, Asia and Africa. However, beyond the notion of a North-South confrontation, which can be quite simplistic, we cannot avoid the fact that many states in Latin America, Asia and Africa were controlled by military or political regimes that the United States and other highly industrialized capitalist states trained and supported. Therefore, those regimes shared and applied similar perspectives on national security issues.

Sharing similar views as Krasner's, but in a more focussed and enduring exercise, the work of Edward E. Azar and Chung-in Moon tried to develop a new model to understand the notion and practice of national security in the Third World, particularly regarding their internal dimensions.<sup>49</sup> Within the same parameters, the work of Brian Job, and particularly that of Mohammed Ayoob regarding the post colonial dilemmas of some Third World States, has been of significance for understanding the historical limits, within the present 'world order', that Third World countries have had in developing a clear conceptualization and practice of both 'national interests' and national security regimes.<sup>50</sup> On the other hand, although the work of Abdul-Monem M. Al-Mashat does not completely diverge from the core underpinnings of the Realist school, it does present the outline for a new

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<sup>49</sup>See Edward E. Azar and Chung-in Moon (eds.), *National Security in the Third World: The Managements of International and External Threats*, UK: Published by Edward Elgar Publishing Ltd. for the Centre for International Development and Conflict Management, University of Maryland, US, 1988.

<sup>50</sup>See the following articles: Brian Job, "The Insecurity Dilemma: National, Regime, and State Securities in the Third World" as well as Mohammed Ayoob, "The Security Predicament of the Third World State: Reflections on State Making in a Comparative Perspective" in Brian Job (ed.), *The Insecurity Dilemma: National Security of Third World States*, Boulder/London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1992.

conceptualization of national security for Third World countries in which, as for the other authors, the internal dimension is crucial for a better understanding of the security dilemmas of most Third World countries.<sup>51</sup>

It is, however, the work of Caroline Thomas that, if it not presented a completely different paradigm, has nevertheless, expanded the levels of analysis to include a critical view of the international political economy and its dialectical relationship with the internal and regional development dilemmas of the Third World.<sup>52</sup> Both the external and internal political and economic structures, based on a historical expansion of the capitalist system are for Thomas the main causal links for understanding the complexities of security in the Third World. Thomas, contrary to other authors who focus on Third World security issues, contests the Post World War II view of the international as well as the main epistemological bases of national security studies. Although her work does not fit easily within the Dependencia School, it does share the view that for most post colonial states the main dilemma has been to develop sufficient economic and political independence to give them a level of autonomy to develop minimum internal security conditions, independent political and economic foreign policies, and a sense of regional unity. The other problem detected and quite thoroughly analysed by Thomas is the extreme constraints that the Cold War put upon most Third World countries in managing some level of independent decision making, particularly regarding their security concerns. As she concludes:

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<sup>51</sup>See Abdul-Monem M. Al-Mashat, *National Security in the Third World*, Boulder/London: Westview Press, 1985.

<sup>52</sup>See Caroline Thomas, *In Search of Security: The Third World in International Relations*, Boulder, Col.: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1987.



The outlook of the Third World states remains bleak. While it is very far from true to suggest that everything that happens to them is a result of external factors, it is fallacious to believe that indigenous factors play the most influential role most of the time. In the final analysis, it seems that most Third World states find their efforts to pursue an independent domestic or foreign policy at minimum constrained, and at maximum controlled, by the preferences of the world's strongest states and the systems which they respectively lead. In exceptional cases, . . . , Third World states have a greater chance to be master of their own fate. This remains the privileged position of the few.<sup>53</sup>

Despite the significance of her work, Thomas does not develop a corresponding conceptualization of national security for the Third World or for the Less Developed Countries. However, most of the levels of analysis that she has used, added to a more sophisticated epistemology, could be quite adequate for the development of a more accurate definition of the main conceptual and practical elements of the national security of states such as Mexico.

Beyond the simple or profound differences that characterize the diverse schools of thought, the notion of national security, particularly when applied to states like Mexico, is, as Arnold Wolfers once pertinently stated, an "ambiguous symbol": it has objective and subjective connotations that embody a constant tension between concrete threats toward the core values of a nation-state or its physical existence, and the moral judgements that back or contest the different views of what national security is and for whom. Given the complex nature of nation-states, the opinions of all social actors, although they can be diametrically opposed, are very important if we really want to understand, within a specific historical moment, the real parameters of such an "ambiguous symbol". As A. Wolfers stated:

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<sup>53</sup>Idem.,p.199.

Because the pendulum of public opinion swings so easily from extreme complacency to extreme apprehension, from utopian reliance on “good will” to disillusioned faith in naked force only, it is particularly important to be wary of any simple guide, even one that parades in the realist garb of policy directed solely by the national security interest.<sup>54</sup>

It is in this spirit that a reconceptualization of national security, particularly of Mexico's, has to be developed. We need not only to expand our levels of analysis, or reject fundamental elements of Realism, Idealism or Neo-institutionalism, but also to explore other epistemological and ontological perspectives that might help us develop a more complex and more realistic framework for explaining the overall limits and reaches of the concept.

The concept and practice of national security cannot just be reduced to the security of the state, a specific class or a particular ethnic group. On the other hand, it cannot be overexpanded to include elements that are not, in a strict sense, part of the nation (i.e., international organizations such as the Red Cross or Amnesty International) in both its sociological and politico-juridical dimensions. Likewise, although the military dimension of the concept cannot, and should not be ignored, it cannot permeate the core which goes beyond military/strategic reasoning. Finally, the concept and practice of national security cannot be limited to its international dimension and therefore has to include its internal aspects in a central and not only subsidiary place.

Before we attempt to develop a new conceptual framework, we might take into consideration the following examples about how the notions of ‘national security’ overall, and in the particular case of Mexico as a Less Developed Country, have been conceived:

*Arnold Wolfers*: Security, in any objective sense, measures the absence of threats to acquired values, in a subjective sense, the absence of fear that such values will be attacked.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>54</sup>See Arnold Wolfers, *op. cit.*, p.165.

<sup>55</sup>Arnold Wolfers, *Discord and Collaboration*, *op.cit.*, p.150.

*Robert Mandel*: National security entails the pursuit of psychological and physical safety, which is largely the responsibility of national governments, to prevent direct threats primarily from abroad from endangering the survival of these regimes, their citizenry, or their ways of life.<sup>56</sup>

*National Defence College [Canada]*: National Security is the Preservation of a way of life acceptable to the . . . people and compatible with the needs and legitimate aspirations of others. It includes freedom from military attack or coercion, freedom from internal subversion and freedom from the erosion of the political, economic and social values which are essential to the quality of life.<sup>57</sup>

*Richard Ullman*: A threat to national security is an action or sequence of events that (1) threatens drastically and or a relatively brief span of time to degrade the quality of life for the inhabitants of a state, or (2) threatens significantly to narrow the range of policy choices available to the government of a state or to private, non governmental entities (persons, groups, corporations) within the state.

*National security notions and practices: The case of Mexico.*

Although there are several excellent works on the history of Mexico's national security questions and present challenges most works are rich in historical facts but do not offer conceptual frameworks to pursue a redefinition of the notions and practices of Mexico's national security. One of the facts for not considering the particular notions of national security is because the concept *per se* was not used in the academic or political spheres until

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<sup>56</sup>Robert Mandel, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

<sup>57</sup>Quoted in Barry Buzan, *People Sate & Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era*, *op. cit.* p. 17. Original quote from Course Documents , National Defence College, Kingston, Ontario, 1989.

the 1980s.<sup>58</sup>

Not surprisingly, American scholars have produced work on Mexico's national security issues. Perhaps the most influential studies can be found in David Ronfeldt (ed.), *The Modern Mexican Military: A Reassessment* (1984), and Alden M. Cunningham's article "Mexico's National Security," (1984). Moreover, the more contemporary works of Roderic A. Camp, *Generals in the Palacio* (1992), Donald Schulz, (1995, 1997) and Stephen Wager & Schulz (1994) have been very comprehensive regarding Mexico's new challenges and agenda for national security.

However, although these descriptive studies are very important for a comprehensive understanding of the specific practices, in the name of 'national security', of the Mexican 'intelligence community' since the Mexican Revolution, they do not offer us with alternative perspectives to analyse critically and redefine the country's national security doctrines and practices. These are works that are essentially built upon the assumptions that Mexico's national security should be viewed as the product of a rational and unitary state, regardless of some of the contradictory facts that most of these authors present us with.

In the most comprehensive work on the dominant notions and practices of national security in Mexico, *En busca de la seguridad perdida: Aproximaciones a la Seguridad Nacional Mexicana*,<sup>59</sup> the editor, Sergio Aguayo, who has been one of Mexico's leading scholars on this issue, writes that Mexico's national security cannot be a comprehensive and truly effective tool until the process of democratization is fully concluded. The view of this author, based on conceptual elements of pluralism and neo-institutionalism, is that as long as democracy is not entrenched as an inalienable institution in Mexico, national security is really

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<sup>58</sup>For a good historical synthesis of the use of the concept of national security in Mexico see: Raúl Benítez Manaut, "Sovereignty, Foreign Policy, and National Security in Mexico, 1821-1989," in H.P. Klepak (ed.), *Natural Allies? Canadian and Mexican Perspectives on International Security*, Ottawa: Carleton University Press & Canadian Foundation for the Americas, 1996, pp. 57-91.

<sup>59</sup>Sergio Aguayo & Bruce Michael Bagley, *En Busca de la Seguridad Perdida: Aproximaciones a la Seguridad Nacional Mexicana*, op. cit.

equal to “state” or “regime” security.<sup>60</sup> Furthermore, the author sees in the authoritarian and presidentialist systems of Mexico not only an anachronistic state of things but a threat to the nation’s security.<sup>61</sup>

Although we agree with the normative aspects of the author’s thesis, he does not go further in analysing the socioeconomic causes that have resulted in such a lack of democracy. It seems that Aguayo’s thesis only relies on a vague definition of democracy and that he does not explore further social and political alternatives for a more comprehensive redefinition and practice of Mexico’s national security. As we will see in our case study, an ambiguous definition and practice of democracy can end up being a trap for those social forces and citizens who have been historically and structurally<sup>62</sup> excluded from the type of democracy that Aguayo promotes, which is in essence based on the United States’ model, and is the same one that the present Mexican regime promotes.

Perhaps the best approach to Mexico’s redefinition of national security can be found in James F. Rochlin’s *Redefining Mexican “Security”: Society, State, and Region Under NAFTA*.<sup>63</sup> Rochlin stresses the importance of an epistemological reconsideration of the bases of analysis of Mexico’s post-NAFTA security challenges. Although the book attempts to introduce a neo-Gramscian approach in understanding such threats, it ends up describing, through an implicit theory of chaos, the different threats that the Mexican state and society

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<sup>60</sup>See Sergio Aguayo, “Los usos, abusos y retos de la seguridad nacional mexicana, 1946-1990, in Sergio Aguayo and Bruce M. Bagley, op.cit., pp. 107-146.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid., p. 123.

<sup>62</sup>By structurally excluded we mean that, as a result of economic or cultural reasons, large sectors of the society such as the indigenous peoples have been denied the possibility to integrate into the nation-state’s political structures with their understandings of political and social organization. On the other hand, those sectors of the population who are economically marginalized do not have the minimal conditions to carry out a so called democratic process. Finally the power structures in Mexico’s rural areas have to be changed before any democratic process be implemented.

<sup>63</sup>James F. Rochlin, *Redefining Mexican “Security”: Society, State, and Region Under NAFTA*, Boulder, Col./London, UK: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1997.

have been confronting since the 1982 debt crisis and the subsequent implementation of neoliberal economic policies. It is true, as Rochlin suggests, that there has been a breakdown of the post-revolutionary hegemonic project in Mexico. Moreover, since NAFTA, the country's national security notions and practices are being inserted into a regional understanding of security.

Rochlin focuses on the relationship between economic structures, security arrangements and good governance. He argues that "the state has attempted to pass off what is actually state security for national security", and therefore, "it [the state] itself becomes the peddler of woes to the extent that it may actually be threatening the security of its citizens."<sup>64</sup>

He has presented quite a concise description of the new security problems caused to a great extent by the collapse of the postrevolutionary regime (i.e. narcotraffick, a substantial raise in crime, ecocide, illegal migration, and the indigenous problems). However, when he tries to articulate his theoretical framework with his factual findings he falls into generalities and contradictions that portray a chaotic scenario in which ill defined discourses, ideas and myths, and not the economic structures, are at the core of Mexico's security problems. On the other hand, the fact that since the breakup of the postrevolutionary order and the imposition of neoliberal policies the level of social unrest and criminality has risen does not mean, as Rochlin suggests, that these phenomena become a national security problem. Moreover, Rochlin confuses, through a weakly defined "postmodern" frame, the Zapatista movement and the self-proclaimed autonomous indigenous areas as being part of a regionalist and localist phenomenon, comparable to NAFTA.<sup>65</sup>

This is far from being true, for, as we shall see in our thesis, the Zapatista movement, although rooted in a specific region has, as one of its main goals, to "rescue" the centrality of the nation-state from economically and politically imposed regionalisms. It is a movement whose political positions and demands, as well as politico-military strategies and tactics have

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<sup>64</sup>Ibid., pp. 6-7.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid., pp. 180 and 189.

nothing to do with Rochlin's definition of the 1994 Zapatista upheaval as being part of a "postmodern guerilla war" in a context which, "the centrality of the nation-state has been displaced by transnational influences," or in which "nationalistic views of economy and politics have become antiquated globally".<sup>66</sup> The fact that the EZLN decided, in Gramscian terms, to move towards "a war of position" after the first two weeks of the conflict and enter a set of negotiations does not make it a postmodern movement (whatever Rochlin means by postmodern).

On the other hand, Rochlin states that radical changes in communications technology have "compressed time and space" and hence have had an effect, in an era of "postsovereignty", on the definition of Mexico's security challenges.<sup>67</sup> Although we agree that technology changes the way political struggle takes place, we disagree with the idea that it is inserted in an "era of postsovereignty". It is important not to confuse the means (including political discourses) with the ends, and it is unfortunate that Rochlin falls prey to this confusion. In the end, such generalities and contradictions do not help the author achieve his ultimate goal which is a) to identify the structural and political causes of Mexico's security challenges and b) to redefine the political discourses and praxes of Mexico's national security.

Most non Realist conceptualizations consider both internal and external factors as shaping the development of national security discourses and policies, but they are ambiguous regarding the sources and nature of both the objective and subjective threats to the security of the nation. Moreover, although it is generally acknowledged that the international order and the character of sovereignty are radically changing, there is still a lack of conceptual clarity regarding the specific role of the state, and civil society in the development of 1) specific national 'modes of security' (including public and social security) and, 2) the consolidation and implementation of a national security agenda versus a "state security

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<sup>66</sup>Ibid., p. 12 and 177.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid., pp. 10-11.

agenda”.

Finally, although the literature on Mexico’s national security does begin to explore considerations for minimal political and social stability through the enhancement of democracy,<sup>68</sup> there is still not a clear consensus regarding the objective social, political and economic conditions that can “guarantee” the minimal internal and external conditions for the survival of the nation-state, regardless of the debate on its existence as a sovereign entity, the state is still the central actor for the legal and political protection, from both internal and external threats, of its citizens and their land.

Despite our disagreements with Rochlin’s interpretations of Mexico’s present political crisis, he does open the door for a more comprehensive framework to analyse critically threats to the nation-state. Moreover, he outlines a theoretical framework that captures the full spectrum of the country’s present and future concerns to redefine notions and practices of national security.

Before we open our next chapter, it is important that we outline at least three of the best-developed conceptions of ‘national security’ in Mexico. The following these are essentially based on a combination of Realist and Neo-institutionalist perspectives:

- *Plan Nacional de Desarrollo 1983-1988 (Mexico’s National Development Plan 1983-1988):*

Mexico’s [national security] is defined as “the integral development of the nation as a tool to keep the conditions of liberty, peace and social justice within the constitutional frame.”<sup>69</sup>

- *General Gerardo C.R. Vega:*

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<sup>68</sup>See fn. 61

<sup>69</sup>*Plan Nacional de Desarrollo 1983-1988*, Mexico: Secretaría de Programación y Presupuesto, 1983, p. 61 (translation is mine). This was the first time that any official document mentioned the notion of ‘national security’.



National security is the permanent condition of liberty, peace and social justice that, within an institutional and legal frame are procured by the powers of the federation. . .internally by the means of political, social, economic and military actions that tend to balance dynamically the aspirations and the interests of the diverse sectors of the population and of the country itself. In the external sphere, by safeguarding the territorial integrity and exercising its sovereignty and independence.<sup>70</sup>

- *Luis Herrera-Lasso M. y Guadalupe González G.:*

National security is defined by the ensemble of necessary conditions —political, economic, military, social and cultural— that guarantee the sovereignty, independence and the promotion of the interests of the nation, strengthening the core elements of the national project and reducing to a minimum the weaknesses and inconsistencies that can be translated to windows of vulnerability vis a vis the exterior.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>70</sup>Quoted in Sergio Aguayo Quezada & Bruce Michael Bagley, *En Busca de la seguridad perdida: Aproximaciones a la seguridad nacional mexicana*, Mexico: Siglo XXI editores, 1990, p. 128. Original quote in Vega G. General Gerardo C.R. *Seguridad nacional: Concepto, organización, método*, Mexico, (forthcoming), (translation is mine).

<sup>71</sup>Luis Herrera-Lasso and Guadalupe Gonzalez G, “Balance y perspectivas en el uso del concepto de la Seguridad Nacional en el caso de México,” in Sergio Aguayo, op. cit., p. 391(translation is mine).

## Chapter III

### Redefining the Concept and Praxis of National Security

#### *Introduction*

A starting point for this chapter is to acknowledge that history and ideology have shaped the various definitions of 'national security'. While the development of nation-states has always been accompanied by the need to protect their territorial integrity, core values and dominant economic and social structures, the very specific concept of 'national security', that for some might be a "symbol" that "may not have any precise meaning at all,"<sup>1</sup> has in fact had a quite precise set of meanings that are to be found in its particular historical context and within the prominent theories that have forged its conceptual framework.

In fact, the concept of 'national security' has been at the core of Realism.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, it is a concept that has acquired most of its meanings and uses within the Realist tradition of International Relations. However, as we will attempt to explain through a critique of the concept within Realism, we cannot fully agree with some of its fundamental premisses and

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<sup>1</sup>Arnold Wolfers, *Discord and Collaboration: Essays on International Politics*, Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1962. p. 147.

<sup>2</sup>For an excellent and updated review of the different perspectives within Realism in IR see: Benjamin Frankel (ed.), *Roots of Realism*, U.K.: Cass Series on Security Studies, Frank Cass Publishers, 1997.

definitions.

The main concerns in this chapter are essentially five: (1) To identify the historical context of the concept and practice of ‘national security’, (2) to depict the fundamental premises of the Realist tradition in IR that have a direct impact on the conceptualization and praxis of ‘national security’, (3) to contrast the core assumptions of Realism and Structural-Realism with those of Critical Realism and the Neo-Gramscian assumptions in IR, and (5) to present an alternative model for explaining and redefining ‘national security’ in the Mexican context.

We suggest that there are specific epistemological problems added to particular ideological values that have had a determining influence in the apparently ‘parsimonious’ and ‘value free’ methodologies that both Realists and Structural Realists have applied to explain the concept and practice of national security. As we will try to explain throughout our case study, the above have limited and narrowed the concept’s theoretical and practical nature. Likewise, they have concealed the deeper and more complex structures that at both an international and domestic level compose this ‘contested concept’.

Therefore, a critical assessment of the epistemological and ontological foundations of the meanings and uses of the concept of ‘national security’ is essential. However, this does not automatically dismiss some claims pertaining to Realism. Nor does it deny all the methods of data collection and analysis or specific policies undertaken under the realm of *Realpolitik*. Nevertheless, the Realist tradition has significant ontological problems —with serious social and individual consequences — derived from the way knowledge has been

constructed in conceiving and defining the parameters of 'national security' as an object of knowledge and praxis.

*The concept of power and 'national security'*

A reassessment of the definitions of 'national security' also implies a more complex understanding of the concept of power, or as Berenice Carroll pertinently states, of "the cult of power" in IR<sup>3</sup>. Why such an reassessment? Because the concept of power is at the core of the notion of 'national security'.<sup>4</sup> Although there has been progress concerning the concept's more complex nature, specifically regarding its fungibility related to issue-areas beyond military concerns,<sup>5</sup> the capabilities (military, economic, technological, etcetera) of which the state supposedly 'disposes' for its survival,<sup>6</sup> have been, in the last instance, linked to the politico-military aspects of the concept and to a very narrow understanding of the problems

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<sup>3</sup>For an excellent critique of the 'negative' and narrow way power has been conceived in IR and Security studies see: Berenice Carroll, "Peace Research: The Cult of Power", in *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. XVI, No. 4, Dec. 1972. B. Carroll essentially criticizes three dominant forms that the concept has had, these being: (1) an "uncritical acceptance of prevailing concepts of power"; (2) a "preoccupation with institutions, groups, and persons conceived to be powerful; and (3) an "identification with institutions, groups, or persons conceived to be powerful". pp. 585-617.

<sup>4</sup>For this relationship in Realism see: Paul R. Viotti and Mark V. Kauppi, *International Relations Theory: Realism, Pluralism, Globalism*, N.Y.: Mackmillan Publishing Co., 1990, pp.43-58.

<sup>5</sup>For changes in the static considerations of power within Realism see Robert O. Keohane, "Theory of World Politics: Structural Realism and Beyond", reprinted in P. Viotti and M. V. Kauppi, *International Relations Theory: Realism, Pluralism, Globalism*, Op.Cit. fn 4, pp. 126-167. Also see R. Keohane and J. Nye, *Power and Interdependence: World Politics in Transition*, Boston: Little Brown, 1977.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid, p. 43-44.

that states, other than 'great powers', confront for securing their national integrity.<sup>7</sup>

Although we do agree with the need to apply in particular cases the so-called 'negative' aspects of power related to politico-military 'control', other considerations should be included in any serious understanding of 'national security'. Such considerations, among others, are the following: (1) the Grotian dimension that stresses power derived from the rule of law and conventions at an international level, (2) the political economy perspective —at both a domestic and international level— in which power is understood as a relational phenomenon that results from factors such as relations of production, class conflicts and interdependency and, (3) the particular historical, sociological and ideological dimensions of the concept of 'power' which do not necessarily equal those considered 'negative'.

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<sup>7</sup>Although there has been a more complex understanding of power in Structural Realism, in which it is not seen as both as means and an end as in 'classical Realism', but only an end toward obtaining 'security' which is a concept that includes other factors than just military power, it is still very narrow in that it is based on a focus on those nation-states that have apparently obtained high levels of military security within the international system and therefore, apparently no longer need military force to advance their interests. In the following statements by K. Waltz we can clearly identify such a focus: "Military power no longer brings political control, but then it never did" However, when it comes to keeping the system's status quo, which for Waltz is the main systemic factor for international security and therefore for the security of other nations, he states that: "Force is more useful than ever for upholding the status quo, though not for changing it, and maintaining the status quo is the minimum goal of any great power". Why? Because he believes that, beyond the supposedly anarchical nature of the system it is through the politico-military power of 'great powers', and particularly when they are reduced to two, that security can be met, as he states: "Neither the United State nor the Soviet Union can behave as 'ordinary' states because that is not what they are. Their extraordinary positions in the system lead them to undertake tasks other states have neither the incentive nor the ability to perform. What are these tasks? . . . They are the transforming or maintaining of the system [which after all means control], the preservation of peace, and the management of common economic and other problems." Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, US/UK/Canada/Sydney: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co. 1979, pp. 191, 198-199.

*The epistemology and ontology of 'national security' from a historical perspective*

Although the concept of 'national security' cannot be traced through a precise chronological line, it was first introduced as an integral part of foreign policy through the United States' National Security Act of 1947. The practical aspects of the concept were to protect and enforce, through a politico-military structure,<sup>8</sup> the predominant components of the United States 'national interests',<sup>9</sup> particularly regarding the new external politico-military threats perceived by the dominant US political and economic groups. Because of its post Second World War origins, the concept was mainly framed and supported by the military establishment of the United States, strongly influenced by an extremely anti-communist ideology<sup>10</sup> articulated with the principles of *Realpolitik*.<sup>11</sup> However, it is interesting to note

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<sup>8</sup>Such objective was clearly stated in the National Security Act of 1947 in which the military structure, its role and coordination through civil authorities were defined. See National Security Act of 1947, *Journal of the House of Representatives of the United States, Eightieth Congress, First Session*, US: Government Printing Office, 1947, pp. 627-633.

<sup>9</sup>For a very thorough review of the limits and reaches of the concept of National Interest see: Jutta Weldes, "Constructing National Interests", *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 3 No. 3, Sept. 1996, pp. 275-319; and Donald E. Nuechterlein, "The Concept of "National Interest": A Time for New Approaches", *Orbis*, Vol.23 No. 1, Spring 1979, pp. 73-93.

<sup>10</sup>For one of the most comprehensive studies on the relation between the ideological expressions of anti-communism in the US politico-military establishment and the construction of its National Security discourses and practices see: William Blum, *Killing Hope: US Military and CIA Interventions Since World War II*, Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press, 1995.

<sup>11</sup>For an excellent account of the concept's origins and applications in the United States see: Melvyn P. Leffler, "The American Conception of National Security and the Beginning of the Cold War, 1945-48", in *The American Historical Review*, Volume 89, No. 1, February, 1984. Pp.346-400. By the same author also see his article "National Security" in Michael J. Hogan and Thomas G. Paterson (eds.), *Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

how the spirit of the concept, expressed by Harry S. Truman in his *Annual Message to the Congress on the State of the Union* (January 6, 1947) was much more complex than the dimension it took when expressed in the National Security Act of 1947. President Truman stated with regard to the concept that:

“National Security *does not consist only* of an army, a navy, and an air force. It rests on a much broader basis. It depends on a sound economy of prices and wages, *prosperous agriculture*, on *satisfied* and productive workers, on a competitive private enterprise free from monopolistic repression, on continued industrial harmony and production, on *civil liberties* and human freedoms—on all the forces which create in our men *and women* a strong moral fiber and spiritual stamina.”<sup>12</sup>

It is this rich and complex insight regarding the concept —ignored because of history, policy demands and ideology— that presents us with key ideas that lead to a more sophisticated understanding of politics overall and security politics in particular.

Regarding the concept’s emergence and development in the academic sphere, it was primarily developed as an area of inquiry to respond, as P.G. Bock and Morton Berkowitz suggest, to “the atmosphere of urgency generated by the unremitting stress of the Cold War and the emergence of fabulous new technology of violence.”<sup>13</sup> Therefore, such academic work has had, among other objectives, to support the state apparatus in charge of the ‘security’ of the nation-state, through a supposedly ‘value free’ and ‘scientific’ set of

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<sup>12</sup>See Harry S. Truman, “Annual Message to the Congress on the State of the Union, January, 1947”, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States Containing the Public Messages, Speeches, and Statements of the President*, January 1 to September 31, 1947, US: GPO, 1963, pp. 10-12. Emphasis added by myself.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.* p. 122.

explanations, in assessing external potential threats.<sup>14</sup> National security, as a research field within the discipline of International Relations, has essentially been underpinned by the principles of *Realpolitik* and the scientific philosophy of Positivism.<sup>15</sup>

Although Realists have made attempts to further develop the positivist methodologies of IR and National Security studies, particularly through the work of Kenneth Waltz (1987), most of the ‘classical’ assumptions about the philosophical essence of Realism have been kept as universal truth-claims. Such claims can be summarized through the following theses formulated by Hans Morgenthau:

(1) “Political Realism believes that politics, like society in general, is governed by objective laws that have their roots in human nature. . . Realism, believing as it does in the objectivity of *laws of politics* (emphasis added), must also believe in the possibility of developing a rational theory that reflects, however imperfectly and one-sidedly, these objective laws. It believes also then, in the possibility of distinguishing in politics between truth and opinion —between what is true objectively and rationally, supported by evidence and illuminated by reason, and what is only a subjective judgment, divorced from the *facts*

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<sup>14</sup>Ibid., pp.123-124. We must stress that the conclusions arrived by these authors are not only based on their historical research of the concept which is described in their introduction but also on a thorough critique of four very influential texts that were written during the Cold War. These were: Davis B. Bobrow, editor, *Components of Defense Policy*, Chicago: Rand McNally, 1965; Dale J. Hekhius, Charles G. McClintock and Arthur L. Burns (eds.), *International Stability: Military and Economic Dimensions*, N.Y.: John Wiley & Sons, 1964; E.S. Quade, editor, *Analysis for Military Decisions*, Chicago: Rand McNally, 1964 and Hebert C. Kelman, editor, *International Behavior: A Social-Psychological Analysis*, N.Y.: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1965.

<sup>15</sup>For a recent critique of Positivism in IR see: Steve Smith, “Positivism and Beyond”, in Steve Smith, Ken Booth and Marysia Zalewski, *International Theory: Positivism and Beyond.*, op. cit., fn 14. It is interesting to note that in the case of the former socialist states, ‘national security’ also had a realist dimension in its application but a Historical Materialist framework for its conceptualization. For an understanding of the concept’s similarities and differences between the Anglo-Saxon Realist perspectives and the Soviet Union’s Realist/Marxist perspective see: D. Tomashevski, *Las Ideas Leninistas y Las Relaciones Internacionales Contemporaneas (Lenin’s Ideas and Contemporary International Relations)* (Translated from Russian to Spanish by M. Jusainov), Moscow: Editorial Progreso, 1974.



(emphasis added) as they are informed by prejudice and wishful thinking.”<sup>16</sup>

(2) “Human nature, in which laws of politics have their roots, *has not changed* (emphasis added) since the classical philosophies of China, India, and Greece endeavored to discover these laws.”<sup>17</sup>

(3) “For realism, theory consists in ascertaining facts and giving them meaning through reason. It assumes that the character of a foreign policy can be ascertained *only* (emphasis added) through the examination of the political acts performed and of the foreseeable consequences of these acts. Yet examination of the facts is not enough. To give meaning to the factual raw material of foreign policy, we must approach political reality with a kind of rational outline, a map that suggests to us the possible meanings of foreign policy. . . It is the testing of this rational hypothesis against the actual facts and their consequences that gives theoretical meaning to the facts of international politics.”<sup>18</sup>

(4) “The main signpost that helps political realism to find its way through the landscape of international politics is the concept of interest defined in terms of power. . . [and] the concept of interest defined in terms of power *imposes* (emphasis added) intellectual discipline upon the observer, *infuses* (emphasis added) rational order into the subject matter of politics, and thus makes theoretical understanding of politics possible. . . Realism assumes that its key concept of interest defined as power is an objective category which is universally valid. . . Power may comprise anything that establishes and maintains the control of man over man . . . [and] **International Politics, like all politics, is a struggle for power** (emphasis added by this author).<sup>19</sup>

In this view, the concept of ‘national security’ is equated with a zero-sum game in which, to achieve reasonable levels of ‘security’, states have to be in a constant struggle

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<sup>16</sup>Hans Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* (1985 revised edition by Kenneth W. Thompson). New York: McGraw-Hill Inc., 1985, p. 4.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.* Pp. 4-5.

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 10,11 and 29.

to control others or pay the costs of ‘losing’ their power, hence their security. This assumption has had a determining influence in the way the concept has been defined in the leading academic institutions of the US as well as in its application by its politico-military apparatus.<sup>20</sup>

It is important to stress that the ‘construction’ of the concept, its conceptual ‘language’,<sup>21</sup> and the ideological ‘discourses’ attached to its praxis, have essentially been conceived—despite the differences between ‘classical’ Realists, Behavioralists and Structural Realists—within the different methodological models of Positivism that were mainly developed in the Anglo-American academic sphere.<sup>22</sup> Although Positivism has been expressed through different methodologies, the main premises that have supported both the ‘traditional’ schools in IR<sup>23</sup> and the specific study of National Security can be summarized in the following points:

- Within the Comtian tradition, Positivism is a philosophical system for which

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<sup>20</sup>For a very concise account of some of the core works derived from such institutions and their relationship with the politico-military apparatus see: P.G. Bock and Morton Berkowitz, “The Emerging Field of National Security” in *World Politics*, op.cit., fn. 12

<sup>21</sup>With regard to ‘language’ within Positivism as applied to Social Sciences see: Richard Von Mises, “Positivism”, in Bernard Susser (ed.) , *Approaches to the Study of Politics*, New York/Toronto: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1992. For a firm critique of Positivism regarding the formation of concepts for Social Science see: William Outhwaite, *Concept Formation in Social Science*, London/Boston/ Melbourne/ Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983.

<sup>22</sup>See Ken Booth, *Strategy and Ethnocentrism*, London: Croom Helm, 1979.

<sup>23</sup>In the context of our study, by ‘traditional’ I refer to most schools of thought from the Idealists, Realists and [Neo] or Structural Realists, Behavioralists, the functionalists and Neo-functionalists and the Pluralists/Neo-liberal and/or Neo-institutionalists. Those that have *not* used Positivist methodologies have been the different Marxist perspectives in IR as well as the so called Post-modernists. See Steve Smith, “Positivism and Beyond”, in *International Theory: Positivism & Beyond*, op.cit., pp. 149-186.

particular knowledge can only be based on events or 'facts' sensed by perception, therefore it is essentially based on an empiricist epistemology.

- Regarding general knowledge, it is based on the Humean theory of causal laws, in which constant patterns of atomistic events show in space and over time.
- Objects out of the sense-perception cannot be considered as objects of knowledge. Conversely, any object of sense-perception constitutes a possible object of science. Therefore, only statements about phenomena which can be directly experienced can count as knowledge.
- Cognitive claims of theory such as metaphysics, morality and aesthetics are rejected.
- For there to be causal laws in the Humean sense, subjects and objects of knowledge (agents-structures) have to be completely detached from one another with objects of knowledge having an independent nature. Therefore, from our perceptual system, 'society' and the events or 'facts' that 'derive' from it have to be understood as independent objects and therefore, a *reification* of the objects of knowledge takes place.
- Scientific inquiry has to be 'value free' for it is the only way to separate 'facts' from 'value' and to understand the causal laws of the object of study.
- In the Popperian tradition theories are verified through "falsification". This is through the contrast of theory with direct experience.
- Social phenomena can be studied with the same methods as natural phenomena.
- Because of the supposed regularity of social phenomena causal laws can be explained through 'deductive-nomological' and/or 'inductive-statistical' methodologies. This presupposes that social reality is considered a 'closed system' in which we can deduce, conforming to laws of nature or rules of logic, the behavior of specific objects of knowledge and induce, through data corresponding to 'value free' 'facts', the outcomes of social patterns or the present and future behavior of the 'independent' objects of knowledge.

Although these epistemological and ontological premises have attempted to reach higher levels of objectivity regarding the study and practice of national security, they have not been able to fully capture the complexity of the historical structures of both nation-states and their international entourage. This has been justified by the apparently ‘independent’ nature of social phenomena that, therefore, can only be explained through sense-perception and ‘neutral’ methodologies. Hence, if we want a more adequate conceptualization of our objects of knowledge as well as better methodologies to explain their nature, we have to move from the sense-perceptual system of knowledge based on Humean laws of apparently constant patterns of atomistic events to a system of knowledge where the internal contradictions that shape our objects of knowledge are revealed. Why? Because any ‘detachment’ from the historical and ideological nature of social objects of knowledge, hence of agents and structures, derives, as Bhaskar pertinently suggests, from a *voluntarist* approach that, although ideally it ought to ‘empower’ human agency, artificially dissociates it from the concrete social contradictions —of which it is a direct actor — from the previous and present structures.<sup>24</sup> Such ‘detachment’ from the contradictions that make up history and its corresponding social structures has justified, as being ‘scientific’ or ‘realist, the predominant conceptualizations and practices of ‘national security’.<sup>25</sup> Policies related to such conceptualizations of national security become *praxes per se* and therefore de-contextualise human practices from their historical contradictions that are expressed in concrete structures

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<sup>24</sup>See Roy Bhaskar, *Reclaiming Reality: A Critical Introduction to Contemporary Philosophy*, London/N.Y.: Verso, 1989, pp. 4-9.

<sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 61.

shaped by social and class conflicts. Marx wisely stated that, regarding the anchored relationship between humanity and history, “men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past.”<sup>26</sup> Therefore, agents and observers are confronted by their own objectified contradictions that are concretized through specific structures as the nation-state or the international system in which history, as Christian Heine and Benno Teschke argue, “is the process of the contradictory subject-object dialectic.”<sup>27</sup>

Therefore, any scientific assumptions that aspire to the status of universal, ‘value free’ and ‘neutral’ truth-claims can only grasp relative, not absolute knowledge of reality for such reality is constantly changing through a concrete struggle between past contractions and new aspirations carried out by opposing social, economic and political forces. These forces have transformed or intended to preserve, within a dialectical dynamic, specific modes of production, and what Richard J. Blackburn pertinently considers, as the specific ‘modes of security’. As R. Blackburn states regarding such modes:

“The tools and implements at the disposal of a mode of livelihood are not just forces of production. . . it is not only productive forces, but also pre-emptive and reparative forces which are needed to conduct human relations. . . Just as modes of production and reproduction are needed in the first place to avoid disasters of famine and depopulation, which, if the modes are efficient, may never happen, so the mode of security is required in the first place to ensure

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<sup>26</sup>Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, N.Y.: International Publishers, 1963, p. 15.

<sup>27</sup>Christian Heine and Benno Teschke, “Sleeping Beauty and the Dialectical Awakening: On the Potential of Dialectic for International Relations”, in *Millenium: Journal of International Studies*, Summer 1996, Vol. 25, No. 2, p. 415,

freedom from attack, or in the case of attack, from defeat or subjugation by alien powers, which again, if efficient may never happen."<sup>28</sup>

However, although they seem to be separate phenomena, such 'modes of security' should be considered as being historically related to those of production. As we will attempt to show throughout our case study, to accept and work with the above assumptions can only be advanced through a dialectical understanding of social structures from which 'facts' cannot be *reified* and *voided* from their historical content which is formed *mutatis mutandis* through a power struggle between the social forces that make up the main structures of history.<sup>29</sup>

It is the social and political struggles through history to *preserve* or *transform* the dominant 'modes of production' and 'security' that make the *sui generis* nature of social structures dialectical and not based on a pattern of atomistic events. Therefore, to redefine a concept like 'national security' we have to carry out a twofold exercise in which: (a) we have to assess the internal conceptual logics of a the concept, which can be in 'pure' logical terms quite coherent, and (b) compare the former with the social, political and economic

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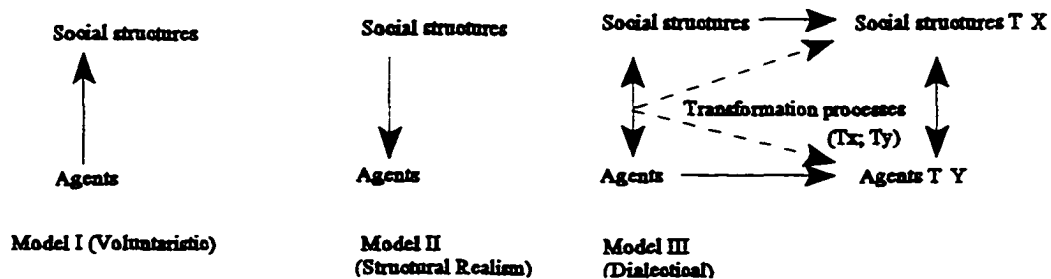
<sup>28</sup>Richard James Blackburn, *The Vampires of Reason: An Essay in the Philosophy of History*, London/N.Y.: Verso, 1990, pp. 57-58.

<sup>29</sup>By 'social forces' we mean the main actors in both a domestic and international level that directly affect, shape and transform the material basis and their corresponding regimes, institutions and ideologies. Such forces can be social classes (expressing and organizing their interests through unions, corporations (national and Multinational), political parties and the Gramscian concept of 'historic blocs'). We would add that such forces can also be constituted by social actors other than classes (ethnic groups, feminist groups, environmental organizations and academic institutions directly involved in the transformation of the political, social and economic order at both an international and domestic level). For a definition of social actors directly related to the modes of production at an international level see: Robert Cox, *Production, Power, and World Order: Social Forces in the Making of History*, N.Y.: Columbia University Press, 1987.

contradictions that, in a specific historical context, make up the concept's 'real' substance and consequently, give it a more adequate operational dimension.

For this exercise to be fully congruent with our critique regarding the lack of a dialectical process in most IR perspectives,<sup>30</sup> it is important to understand the main differences between a non dialectical approach and a dialectical one. These can be better depicted in the following models of agent-structure relations:

**Figure 1. III**



\*Models based on Roy Bhaskar's *Reclaiming Reality*, N.Y./London: Verso, 1993, pp. 74-77.

Model I is based on the Weberian sociological theory in which social objects or structures are essentially explained as the results of human will. Model II is based on Durkheim's sociological theory in which social structures, after being created by human

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<sup>30</sup>For an excellent study on the lack of dialectical thinking as well as on the dominance of positivism in IR see Christian Heine and Benno Teschke, "Sleeping Beauty and the Dialectical Awakening: On the Potential of Dialectic for International Relations," op.cit., fn 7

agency, are conceived as having a life of their own and become the main constraints for human activity. This model has been at the core of Structural Realism and Neo-institutionalism, which consider the international system as having a nature of its own that can directly constrain and determine the agent's actions. Model I has been at the core of Realism which focuses on the power of human nature and those who supposedly control it such as statesmen. Model III is a dialectical model based on Critical Realism.<sup>31</sup> In this model, which Bhaskar describes as a “*transformative*” one, agents do not create social structures for these always pre-exist them. It is, as Bhaskar states “an ensemble of structures, practices and conventions that individuals *reproduce* or *transform*. . . but which would not exist unless they do so. But it is not the product of the latter.”<sup>32</sup> In other words, social structures provide, through their dialectical relationship with agents, specific objective and subjective conditions for particular human activities. Therefore, we do have a differentiation —which has developed through history — between social structures and agents but they are linked through a dialectical relationship (vertical lines) in which they mutually *reproduce* or *transform* each other (dotted diagonal lines with TX and TY as the *transformational* or *reproductive* results of such dialectical interactions). This dialectical relationship suggests a dynamic and interdependent relation between agents and structures in which change is a constant. As a result, concepts have to constantly be redefined.

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<sup>31</sup>Bhaskar, *op. cit.*, fn 24, pp. 76-78.

<sup>32</sup>Bhaskar, *Ibidem*.



*From a Realist approach based on a 'positional model' to Critical Realism or the 'dialectic of concrete totality'<sup>33</sup>.*

Although an apparent goal of Realism and Structural Realism has been to explain objectively the concept of 'national security', as we mentioned above, it has not been exempt from an ideological context that has tended to blur the borders between 'reality' and ideology. This is due fundamentally to four factors: (1) its ethnocentric nature which has been predominantly Anglo-American;<sup>34</sup> (2) the reification of the state and the international system; (3) the desire to present universal truth-claims and (4) the indifference with regard to other actors and forces beyond the state. These factors have had a strong impact on the perceptions or mis-perceptions regarding the potential *threats* to the nation-state. The above, related to a very pessimistic appreciation of the international system or order, has helped to reproduce, through discourses of conflict, situations of fear and threat, directed not just towards other nation-states but also, as we will see in our case study, towards specific ethnic groups, classes or civil society at large.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup>For the combination of the dialectics of concrete totality and Bhaskar's Critical Realist model see Christian Heine and Benno Teschke, *op.cit.*, fn 7.

<sup>34</sup>With regard to its Anglo-American predominance see: Stanley Hoffman, 'An American Social Science: International Relations,' *Daedalus*, Summer 1977, No. 106, pp. 41-60. See also Ekkehart Krippendorff, 'The Dominance of American Approaches in International Relations,' in High C. Dyer and Leon Mangasarian (eds.), *The Study of International Relations: The State of the Art*, London: Macmillan, 1989, pp. 28-39. With regard to its ethnocentrism see Ken Booth, *Strategy and Ethnocentrism*, *op.cit.*, fn 22.

<sup>35</sup>For an excellent work regarding the relationship between discourse and the creation of objects of fear and threats see: Simon Dalby, "Contesting an Essential Concept: Dilemmas in Contemporary Security Discourse," *Norman Paterson School of International Affairs Occasional Papers Series*, No. 6, 1994, and also by Dalby, *Creating the Second World War: The Discourse of*

As a result of the above, some phenomena of significance to Realists have to be acknowledged and dealt with as potential threats for both the security of nations and humanity itself. Such facts, among many others, are large stockpiles of arms in an international order with no effective supranational structures to control their production, distribution and use, the full-scale devastating power of nuclear and/or biochemical weapons or the concrete arming and clear threatening attitudes of different social and political groups at a domestic or international level. However, in spite of their concrete existence, to *explain* such facts, we *cannot*, for the sake of ‘parsimony’, isolate them —and their potential destructiveness — from the social, economic and politico-ideological structures, at both a national and international level. Although it is understandable that such security concerns have to be dealt with by different means, which in some cases call for the use of military power, in their explanation, reproduction or transformation we cannot ignore or dismiss a historical and dialectical analysis of the economic, social and political forces that at both a domestic and international level have helped foster the political and economic orders upon which they rest.

Hence, if we attempt to understand the conceptual elements of ‘national security’ through a ‘different lens’, we might agree upon some facts that are considered as real threats to the security of the nation-state, but will disagree as to their nature and causes. Therefore, the remedies for such apparent internal and external hostile displays of military and/or political threats will not be the same.

It is important to stress that the major problems in most conceptualizations of

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*Politics*, Chicago: Pinter, 1990.

'national security' and its diverse issues are not always in the descriptive side of the different studies carried out but are located in the *a-historical* and *reifying* tendencies of the epistemological grounds upon which these are carried out.<sup>36</sup> Unfortunately, the extremely empiricist epistemology that has permeated the study of 'national security' has mostly neglected the specific social forces that, through a dialectical relationship, have shaped its political, economic and normative aspects of the former.

The result of this epistemology has been a very narrow definition of what constitutes or *ought* to make up the national security of states. This reductionism provokes, at both domestic and international levels a set of mis-perceptions in which the particular 'modes of security' from a nation-state are perceived within a matrix of absolute gains. Therefore, what is supposed to be the 'security' of a state becomes a threat for: (a) other nation-states, (b) its more disadvantaged members in society and, (c) the planet and life overall. However, if national security is understood through a system based on relative gains or non-zero sum games resulting from the dialectical nature of its structure, it can be characterized and practiced comprehensively rather than just as a politico-military issue.<sup>37</sup> Therefore, we cannot

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<sup>36</sup>By *a-historical* we mean the proclivity in Realism to create universal truth-claims that go beyond time and space thereby ignoring the more complex dynamics of history. With regard to the *reification* process, we are referring to the tendency of conceiving the state, as well as the international system, as independent objects with 'a life of their own' beyond the influence of human agency.

<sup>37</sup>One way in which the zero-sum game or the concept of 'absolute gains' in international politics has been downplayed is by the inclusion of economic issues that at an international level have produced higher levels of 'interdependency'. However, beyond the highly industrialized/capitalist world, when it comes to national security issues, there is still a tendency for enacting policies based on the 'Prisoner's Dilemma' or the game of 'Chicken'. For an excellent account regarding the debate concerning the limits and possibilities of relative gains in international politics see: James E. Dougherty and Robert L. Pfaltzgraff, Jr., *Contending Theories of International Relations: A Comprehensive Survey* (3<sup>rd</sup>. Ed.), N.Y.: Harper and Row, 1990, pp. 507-534. Also see, among others: Glenn H. Snyder, "'Prisoner's Dilemma' and 'Chicken' models in International Politics," *International Studies*

dissociate the conceptualization and practice of 'national security' from the dialectical processes that take place both in nation-states as well as in the international system or structure.<sup>38</sup>

With this in mind and because of the overwhelming influence that Structural Realism has had on the study of national security, its main premises have to be addressed and compared with the alternative models that we may suggest as more adequate for our specific endeavor. Developed by Kenneth Waltz in his *Theory of International Politics*, Structural Realism, or what David Dessler calls the "positional model,"<sup>39</sup> has permeated most

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*Quarterly*, March 1971, No. 15, 58; Robert Jervis, "Cooperation Under the Security Dilemma," *World Politics*, January 1978, No. 30, pp. 167-124; With regard to the idea of relative gains as a result from economic issues particular pertaining to highly industrialized nation-states see: John A.C. Conybeare, "Public Good, Prisoner's Dilemma and the International Political Economy," *International Studies Quarterly*, March 28, 1984, No. 28, pp. 48-22. Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye, *Power and Interdependence: World Politics in Transition*, Boston: Little Brown, 1977; Robert Keohane, *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984.

<sup>38</sup>By structure we understand a set of historically grounded recurrent social activities that are organized through a particular system of social relations of production, classes and common rules, norms (in some cases shared quite broadly by consensus or high democratic practices) and institutions underpinned by a 'national interest' or *raison d'etat*. Although we share most Marxists understandings on structure, particularly those by Antonio Gramsci and the contemporary work in IR of Robert Cox, we do disagree with the idea, within the Marxist tradition, of defining structure as a pattern of relationships which are totally independent from human agency. Such understanding of structure, which is quite similar to 'structural realism' in IR has been fundamentally developed by Louis Althusser and Etienne Balibar in *Reading Capital*, London: New Left Books, 1970, pp. 111-112. For structure in R. Cox and his interpretation of Gramsci's understanding of structure, particular applied to the state and the *raison d'etat* see: Robert Cox, *Production, Power, and World Order: Social Forces in the Making of History*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1987, pp. 4 and 408-410 (notes 9-10).

<sup>39</sup>For a very good critique of the agent-structure debate as well as the opposition to Waltz' work through "scientific" or "critical" realism see: David Dessler, "What's at stake in the agent-structure debate?", *International Organization*, Vol. 43, No. 3, Summer 1989, pp. 441-475.

contemporary studies dealing with the notion and practice of 'national security'.<sup>40</sup>

Although it is important to acknowledge that Waltz' attempt to delineate, through a two-tiered model, the structural differences between national and international systems, can be an important tool in understanding interactions among military powers in terms of the distribution of their politico-military capabilities and the formation of alliances and balances of power, his model has problems that have to be addressed. Two of the main problems at the core of such model are the following:

- The assumption that the 'international structure' is, after being 'spontaneously formed' by 'self-interested acts', completely independent of human agency. This poses a serious disadvantage for any dialectical, and therefore transformational, understanding of international politics.
- The assumption that describes structure as being by 'nature' anarchical dismisses the economic, social and political orders and forces, as well as their corresponding normative aspects as being major organizational factors. Likewise, it undervalues the impact of domestic politics in shaping the international structure for, beyond what happens in 'great powers', it essentially ignores the domestic politics of most nation-states as being relevant to the international structure.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>40</sup>For one of the latest and more influential Waltzian study on international and national security see: Barry Buzan, *People States & Fear (2d edition): An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era*, Boulder, Col.: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1991.

<sup>41</sup>See Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, op.cit., f.n.16, pp. 100-101.

Therefore, it represents a model in which state foreign policies, particularly those concerned with national security, are essentially conditioned by the international structure and their politico-military position in it. In Waltz' model, which is based on an explicit analogy with 'classical' economics—which is based in turn on a positivist epistemology—we can clearly appreciate the core of his thought: "Microeconomic theory describes how an order is spontaneously formed from the self-interested acts and interactions of individual units—in this case, persons and firms, The theory then turns upon the two central concepts of economic units and the market."<sup>42</sup> In fact, the same principles of 'classical' realism regarding power as a means and an end are preserved but 'systemized' by a twofold action: (1) There is a distinction between the individual, national and international levels in which the international one is understood as an independent and anarchical self-help system, (2) Self-interested units although constrained and conditioned by the "international structure", can enjoy higher or lower levels of autonomy depending on their "attributes" or "capabilities"(these being particularly focused on their military dimension) that express specific patterns of "interactions". The main characteristic of this systems-level theory, as Waltz states, is how "the organization of units (which actually are organized by a complete 'lack of organization'[sic]) affects their behavior and their interactions," as opposed to what he considers reductionist theories that "explain international outcomes through elements and combinations of elements located at the national or sub national level."<sup>43</sup> What this model creates is a *reification* of structures in which: (a) the international structure is considered

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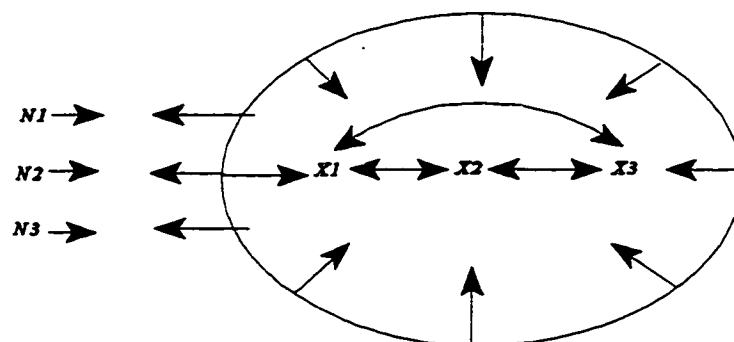
<sup>42</sup>Waltz, *ibid.*, p. 89.

<sup>43</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 39 and 60.

totally independent from the other two levels and, (b) the other two levels, which are also considered as totally independent from each other and the international one, *cannot* condition or constrain it. Therefore, there are no dialectical, and hence transformational relationships among the different levels.

The problem, hence, is not in acknowledging the fact that there are structures that, through time and space circumscribe our conceptualization and practice of 'national security', but in the way we produce knowledge about such structures. Waltz' determinism can be understood through his own depiction of agent-structure relations seen in Figure 2.III. in which the system is a 'closed' circle that is, in an unidirectional way, 'conditioning' states that do not have a direct impact on the international system. States external relations are represented by  $X1$ ,  $X2$ ,  $X3$ , with their internal relations represented by  $N1$ ,  $N2$ , and  $N3$ <sup>44</sup>.

Figure 2. III.




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<sup>44</sup>For original model see Waltz, *ibid.* P. 100.

The fundamental weaknesses of Waltz' model for an adequate understanding of the notion and practice of 'national security' can be summarized in the following points:

- The international structure or system is considered as a 'closed and independent' one whose only basic characteristic is that it is by 'nature' anarchical. This ignores the more complex features of the 'system' that is in fact organized by regional and international economic, political and legal 'orders' and regimes. Moreover, the diversity and complexity of international and regional regimes and 'orders' are too complex to be viewed in a *mechanistic* frame and, hence, simply as 'independent' variables.
- The levels of analysis are very restricted, and are depicted as *reified* systems. This constrains us from expanding our levels of analysis and categories to carry out a more accurate study of the dynamics of international politics in general and of national security issues in particular.
- The international structure is considered, on a debatable premise, as being 'by nature' a 'self-help system'. In the same tenor, the state and the individual levels are considered as also being, 'by nature', 'self-interested, rational actors'. This assumption, based on universal truth-claims, undermines the depth of structures that are constantly transformed by inextricable relations that in some cases are based on historical antagonisms. Some of the key relations ignored by Waltz' model are found in the following factors: (1) particular 'modes of production' and 'regimes of accumulation' at both a domestic and international level; (2) particular 'modes of security' derived by



specific sociological and political interactions at both domestic and international/regional levels; (3) specific political and legal 'regimes' derived from an ever-increasing range of dealings among transnational actors such as multinational corporations, international organizations and non governmental organizations.

As an alternative to such concerns we will take into consideration a dialectical model based on a link between the core assumptions of Critical Realism and the Neo-Gramscian perspectives in IR.<sup>45</sup>

National security issues should be understood not only as a result of external politico-military pressures but also of the dialectical relationship between the social forces that, within specific political and economic arrangements at both a national and international level, are in a constant struggle to protect or transform such arrangements. A more accurate and comprehensive analysis of what makes up the security of a nation-state requires expanding our levels of analysis by including political economy and ideological factors. Therefore, we will take into consideration the work done by Neo-Gramscians in IR such as Robert Cox and Stephen Gill. These authors base their models on key theses from Gramsci's work regarding the political and social impact of economic and political hegemonic projects at both a

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<sup>45</sup>For a recent articulation between Critical Realism and Gramsci's historical perspective see: Esteve Morera, *Gramsci's Historicism: A Realist Interpretation*, London/N.Y.: Routledge, 1989. For the specifics of Critical Realism see Roy Bhaskar, *A Realist Theory of Science*, Brighton: Harvester, 1978; Roy Bhaskar, *Reclaiming Reality: A Critical Introduction to Contemporary Philosophy*, op.cit fn 14. For the specific application of Dialectics in IR see Christian Heine & Berno Teschke, "Sleeping Beauty and the Potential of Dialectic for International Relations," op.cit., fn 7

domestic and international level.<sup>46</sup>

A more complex and comprehensive model to explain the concept and practice of 'national security' in general, and for our case study in particular, requires analysis of:

1. The objective and subjective conditions that have shaped the contemporary international and regional orders.
2. The domestic nature of such hegemonic projects since the 1980s.
3. The dialectical relations between the international/regional hegemonic projects and Mexico's social and politico-economic structures.

This will permit us to pinpoint the dialectical dynamics between the key historical conjunctures at both an international and national level that have shaped the dominant conceptualizations and practices of 'national security' in Mexico. Although other alternative epistemologies are acknowledged and used in IR, such as hermeneutics, feminism or post-modernism, these have limitations for our specific research. Such considerations can be clearly identified in the following table:

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<sup>46</sup>Although security issues have not been as such the main focus of neither Cox' nor Gill's work, their work is permeated with such concerns. Amongst their very vast works two of their key works deal directly with security issues those are: Robert Cox, "Production and Security," in Robert Cox with Timothy J. Sinclair, *Approaches to World Order*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995, pp. 276-296. And Stephen Gill, *American Hegemony and the Trilateral Commission*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990

**Table 1.III. Comparative claims between Critical Realism, Critical Theory and alternative epistemologies\*.**

Alternative epistemologies	Standards for inquiry				
	Naturalism	Objectivism	Empiricism	Behaviouralism	Dialectical Materialism
Hermeneutics	No	Yes	No	No	No
Critical Theory	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
Critical Realism	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
Post-modernism	No	No	No	No	No
Feminism	No	Yes	No	No	Yes/No*

\* Some of the information for this table is developed from Steve Smith, "Positivism & Beyond," in Steve Smith, Ken Booth & Marysia Zalewski (eds.), *International Theory: Positivism & Beyond*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, p.37.

*Putting forward a 'transformational' model to explain Mexico's national security*

Besides Alexander Wendt's critique in his discussion about the agent-structure *problematic* in IR and David Dessler's further attempt to make it a workable criterion for the development of a new research program in IR,<sup>47</sup> Critical Realism, with its emphasis on dialectical materialism, has developed a set of dialectical explanations of social structures as being, in a *sui generis* way, 'real'. This allows our analysis to accommodate most of the phenomena to which Realism is sensitive, but gives us the potential to reassess it through a more complex criterion of inquiry. Hence, it helps us pursue a deeper explanation of what

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<sup>47</sup>See ., pp. 335-70, and David Dessler, "What's at Stake in the Agent-Structure Debate?", *International Organization*, Vol. 453, No. 3, pp. 441-73.

Bhaskar calls the *trans-factual*<sup>48</sup> causes of social phenomena such as the security of nation-states. Bhaskar's premises characterize the *sui generis* nature of social structures as opposed to natural ones:

- (i) social structures, unlike natural structures, do not exist independently of the activities they govern;
- (ii) social structures, unlike natural structures, do not exist independently of the agents' conceptions of what they are doing in their activity;
- (iii) social structures, unlike natural structures, may be only relatively enduring (so that tendencies they ground may not be universal in the sense of space-time invariant).<sup>49</sup>

Thus, one of the main goals of Critical Realism, concerning social phenomena such as national or international structures, is to make a clear assessment of the agent-structure *problematic* which, as we will attempt to prove through our case study, is at the core of IR's weakness in conceptualizing the notion and practice of 'national security'.

Realism posits an uncontested set of stratified social structures in which phenomena

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<sup>48</sup>The concept of *transfactuality* of the *trans-factual* nature of scientific laws essentially refers to Critical Realist's argument that the analysis of experimental activity shows that the regularities necessary for the empirical identification of laws, particularly concerning social sciences, can only be held under special, and in general, closed conditions which are artificially created. The fact that it is almost impossible to create an artificial environment to study social phenomena has as a result the need to understand laws in social activity only as *tendencies*. Therefore, empirical facts can be real but not universal for they are placed in an 'open system' which has a very complex set of variables that cannot be discovered and explained by simple observation but which have an impact on particular conjunctions that transform such structures and the concepts attached to them. This has the effect of making 'closed' models based on Newtonian mechanics such as Waltz' model of International Politics as being deterministic and reductionist. See R. Bhaskar, *Reclaiming Reality*, op.,cit., pp.16, 149 and 181.

<sup>49</sup>See Roy Bhaskar, *Reclaiming Reality: A Critical Introduction to Contemporary Philosophy*, op.,cit., fn. 29, p. 79.

or ‘facts’ have already been identified and conceptualized. These however, have been systematically misinterpreted and inadequately explained as a consequence of using the same epistemological and ontological methods used for explaining natural structures. One of the causes for this is —as shown in Structural Realism’s Newtonian model— its propensity to explain both facts and structures as if they had a ‘mechanics’ of their own. This amounts to a reification of structures that conceals their deeper and richer complexities. On consequences of ‘reification’ R. Bhaskar argues that: “Facts . . . are real, but they are historically specific social realities. The mystification attached to them derives from the fact that in our spontaneous mode of thought and the philosophy of positivism that reflects it, the properties possessed by facts *qua social* objects are transformed into qualities belonging to them as things. Fetishism by *naturalizing* facts, de-historizes them.”<sup>50</sup> The propensity to assess ‘facts’ and social structures as *created* and then becoming *spontaneously* independent from their agents, conceals the more intricate and perhaps ‘messy’ nature of both international and national structures that not only are dialectically related to each other but are ‘open’.

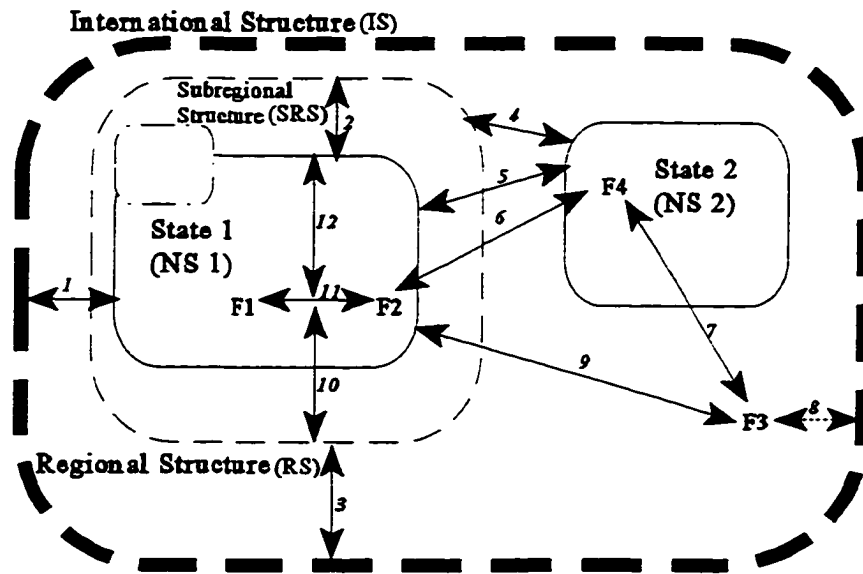
Therefore, our model for explaining in a dialectical manner international relations must be based on an ‘open’ structure in which change through time and space is constant. As seen in Figure 3.III the international structure is represented by a dotted line that, contrary to the Realists’ perspective, has a multi factorial nature that is constantly changing by the dialectical relations between social and politico-economic forces (F1, F2, F3, F4, F5). These forces, located at both the domestic and transnational levels, shape both the international and

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<sup>50</sup>Ibid., p. 61.

**regional structures and sub-regional structures (IS, RS, SRS). The dynamics of such relations will have an impact on the particular conceptualizations and practices of National Security'(NS1, NS2). It is important to stress that the specific dynamics that take place in this model are largely determined by 'hegemonic projects' at both national and international levels.**

**Figure 3.III. The dialectics of International Relations**



Main components of Figure 3.III.

↔ : This means that relations among different social, political and economic actors, forces and structures are considered as dialectical.

*Specific relationships:*

1. Between states and the International Structure (IS).
2. Between states\* and Regional(RS)(i.e.,EU, NAFTA, MERCOSUR) or Subregional Structures(SRS)(i.e., the South of Mexico, US-Mexican broder, Chiapas-Guatemalan border)
3. Between RS and SRS and the IS.
4. Between states out and those in the RSs.
5. Between states located out of RSs.
6. Between social forces from different states.
7. Between social forces in and out of states (i.e., Human Rights NGOs and International NGOs such as Amnesty International, or national unions and Multinational Corporations).
8. Between transnational social forces and RSs, SRSs and the IS.
9. Between transnational social forces and states.
10. Between domestic social forces and RSs (i.e., Mexican unions or business chambers and specific NAFTA Comissions)
11. Between different social forces within the state.
12. Between domestic social forces and the state.

\* We would like to add that there is also a set of internal dialectical relationships between (a) the different politico-juridical powers that compose the state (i.e., Executive/Legislative/Judicial) and (b) the different bureaucratic sectors within the state apparatuses.

Both Critical Realism and the Neo-Grainscan perspective in IR share the tendency to explain the agent-structure relationship as dialectical, historical and materialist. Their shared premise that considers social systems as “open historicism,”<sup>51</sup> distances these methodologies from those applied in the study of natural structures, which to a certain extent can be observed within artificially created ‘closed environments’. In other words, any theory that attempts to explain concepts such as ‘national security’ can never start by posing universal truth-claims, because the structures and facts that underpin it are in a constant transformation caused by (1) the dialectical nature of their objective conditions and (2) the direct link between theory and practice. Therefore, our main focus will be in explaining the fundamental internal and external factors that have influenced the conceptualization and practice of Mexico’s national security since the early 1980s. For this we will consider the following propositions:

- The present international or regional structures should be understood as being fundamentally shaped by a historical hegemonic project that, since the Second World War, has been based on the constant expansion, at a global level, of a set of ‘modes of production’ and ‘security’ derived fundamentally from Fordist, and post-Fordist regimes of accumulation.<sup>52</sup>
- Such regimes of accumulation and the institutions and rules that sustain them

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<sup>51</sup>Roy Bhaskar, *Reclaiming Reality*, op.cit.,pp. 84-86.

<sup>52</sup>For a) an explanation of the Fordist and Post-Fordist regimes of accumulation at an international level and b) their relationship with security issues see: Robert Cox, *Production, Power, and World Order*, op.cit. fn 37, and particularly his article, “Production and Security (1993), in Robert Cox with Timothy Sinclair, *Approaches to World Order*, op.cit., fn 45.



should be explained as a result of the antagonisms that exist between the dominant social forces that have helped shape its main features at both a national and international level and those who oppose them.

- An account and analysis of the specific political and economic conjunctures that have shaped the internal structures and their relations with international, regional structures or subregional structures.
- Explanation of the historical dimensions of the concept in which these structures ought to be understood *inter alia*, as a product of objective and subjective struggles between classes and social forces at both a national and international level (including in our case study the Mayan peoples from Chiapas).
- A description of the political and socioeconomic ‘map’ of the main regions in which there are open and violent social and class conflicts. In our case we will focus on the 1994 EZLN (Zapatista National Liberation Army) armed movement which took place in the state of Chiapas and on some aspects of the EPR (Popular Revolutionary Army) movement that has had a lesser impact but that, nevertheless, has been significant in states such as Guerrero or the State of Mexico.

These propositions will be articulated with:

1. A critique of the presumption that the state is a ‘unitary’ and ‘rational’ actor.
2. An assessment of the state’s different degrees of autonomy as related to its objective conditions (economic and geopolitical) and the dominant ideologies

—and hence the dominant ‘national projects’— that shape the main components of its national security.

3. An analysis of the levels of congruity or conflict between Mexican civil society and the hegemonic projects at both the national and international levels as to assess their impact on the conceptualization and practice of national security.

The epistemological underpinnings of our model ought to:

- Privilege a dialectical methodology for our aim is to understand the particular contradictions that underpin the ‘concrete reality’<sup>53</sup> of the concept of ‘national security’ in Mexico.
- Identify the particular historical conjunctures at which the concept of national security has been reshaped. For this it is important to understand the dialectics of the concept of national security through its internal contradictions, identifiable by its praxis. It is important to pinpoint the subjective factors of the concept that express its appearance, essence, form and content through ideological discourses such as “revolutionary nationalism” or “neoliberal nationalism”.

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<sup>53</sup>By ‘concrete reality’ we refer to an understanding of reality as a result of the dialectical relationship between theory and practice. This means that the material expressions of human agency such as the specific ‘modes of production’ or of ‘security’ are an integral part of a never ending process of reflexivity (cognition) and communication (inter-subjectivity). For an excellent synthesis of the dialectical materialist thought see Karel Kosik, *Dialectics of the Concrete: A Study on Problems of Man and World*, Dordrecht and Boston, MA: Reidel Publishing Co., 1976.

- **Be transformational in the sense of acknowledging the dialectical relation between 1) theory and praxis and 2) agents and structures.**

**In pursuit of these aims, we must always bear in mind at least two fundamental questions being the following:**

- 1). For *whom* is a particular conceptualization and practice of national security?
- 2). Can a particular conceptualization and practice of national security *jeopardize* the security of the nation-state that it is meant to protect?

## Chapter IV

### **The Transition from “Revolutionary Nationalism” to “Neoliberal Nationalism”: Mexico’s Political Economy and National Security Since the Early 1980s**

*If the ruling class has lost its consensus, i.e. is no longer “leading” but only “dominant”, exercising coercive force alone, this means precisely that the great masses have become detached from their traditional ideologies, and no longer believe what they used to believe previously, etc. The crisis consists precisely in the fact that the old is dying and the new cannot be born; in this interregnum a great variety of morbid symptoms appear.*

Antonio Gramsci, *Quaderni*, 1949<sup>1</sup>

#### *Introduction*

In the early 1980s Mexico’s political economy experienced its most radical shift since the Mexican Revolution. The import-substitution model of development was crippled by a set of structural and macroeconomic pressures at both the domestic and the international level. These pressures were exacerbated by a set of policy mistakes made, to a great extent, by a highly centralized government characterized by a strong ‘nationalist-populist’ discourse and a disproportionate concentration of power in the hands of the president. There was a slow but steady decomposition of the political system. Some argued to keep Mexico’s industrial and financial sectors under the strict control of the state, meaning a strong public sector.

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<sup>1</sup>Antonio Gramsci, (Quintin Hoare & Geoffrey Nowell Smith editors and translators), *Selections from Prison Notebooks (Quaderni)*, New York: International Publishers, 12<sup>th</sup> printing, 1995, p. 275-76.

Others urged the government to ‘open’ the economy by joining the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT).<sup>2</sup> The end result of the López Portillo regime (1976-1982) was a liquidity crisis in 1982 that forced the incoming president to put forward a Structural Adjustment Plan prescribed by the IMF and to accelerate the opening of Mexico’s economy by joining the GATT in 1986. As a result of the structural adjustments put forward, the state began to retreat from the economy. Pressures to reduce the public sector were unbearable and the state was forced to make deep cuts in social assistance, widening the gap between rich and poor.<sup>3</sup>

The 1980s were considered a ‘lost decade’ where growth rates were negative and inflation was at its highest levels in Mexican history since the Great Depression. Consensus was deteriorating, legitimacy eroding and the state’s autonomy seriously decreasing. The De la Madrid regime (1982-1988) laid the foundations for a new political economy: the state fully embraced neoliberalism and the nationalist-populist discourse gave way to a discourse of ‘modernization’. At the end of the De la Madrid regime, the macro-economy was showing some signs of stability; however, the political system was showing serious signs of decomposition: De la Madrid’s successor, Carlos Salinas de Gortari, took office with a

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<sup>2</sup>For an excellent review of the political tensions within the ruling party and the state regarding the political economy alternatives see: Roberto Newell G. and Luis Rubio F., “José Lopez Portillo: The Continuation of the Search for Consensus Through Populism,” in R. Newell & L. Rubio, *Mexico’s Dilemma: The Political Origins of Economic Crisis*, Boulder/London: Westview Special Studies Latin America and the Caribbean, Westview Press, 1984. pp. 204-209.

<sup>3</sup>For a good analysis of the social impacts of the Structural Adjustment Plans see: Judith Adler Hellman, *Mexico in Crisis* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition), particularly pp. 254-55. New York/London: Holmes & Meier Publishers, 1988. Also see: Pablo González Casanova and Hector Aguilar Camín (cords.), *México ante la crisis: El impacto social y cultural: las alternativas*, México: Siglo XXI Editores, 1987.

critical lack of legitimacy, the product of a controversial electoral count.

The Salinas regime (1988-1994) was not only to continue its predecessor's economic structural adjustments but to accelerate the process of Mexico's integration into the US hegemonic project at a regional level. President Salinas sold the nation a mirage of stability and progress: Mexico would finally become a member of the 'First World'. International organizations such as the OECD and APEC opened their doors for Mexico in 1993; moreover, a far-reaching North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) was implemented in 1994. However, when 'the party was over', Mexico awoke with a hang over that has not yet ended. On January 1, 1994, the date set to celebrate the application of NAFTA, the marginalized from the forgotten South awoke to the sound of rebellion: The Zapatista National Liberation Army or Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (EZLN) had taken by arms several cities in the border state of Chiapas. In March of the same year the PRI candidate for the presidency was murdered and several months later the Secretary General of the PRI met the same fate. Meanwhile the trumpeted macroeconomic stability was shaking until it collapsed a few weeks after the triumphant announcements made by the newly elected President. As one of Mexico's specialists in national security, Raúl Benítez Manaut, bluntly stated: "The Presidency of Salinas sought to achieve national security by reviving the economy, and the chosen route for accomplishing this was NAFTA."<sup>4</sup> However, in a context

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<sup>4</sup>Raúl Benítez Manaut, "Sovereignty, Foreign Policy and National Security in Mexico, 1821-1989," in Hal Klepak (ed.) *Natural Allies? Canadian and Mexican Perspectives on International Security*, Ottawa: Carleton University Press & FOCAL, 1996, p. 79. For its policy articulation as a national security concern see: "Objetivos de la Acción Internacional de México," in *Plan Nacional de Desarrollo 1989-1994* (National Development Plan 1989-1994), Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, 1989. Luis Rubio, *¿Como va a afectar México el Tratado de Libre Comercio?* Mexico: FCE, 1992.

of increasing social polarization and injustice, the political economy designed and implemented to “revive Mexico’s economy”, paradoxically, became the nation’s most perilous enemy: The state has undergone a process in which its political and economic autonomy has been seriously eroded at the expense of a higher involvement of the US in its conceptualization and practice of national security.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, the class, ethnic and social contradictions that such an accelerated process have generated have transformed Mexico’s civil society into one that is more aware of its rights but also less tolerant towards the state’s bureaucracies and more prone for violent conflict.

The so-called process of economic ‘modernization’ has produced a polarized society that is in a fierce struggle to redefine its identity(is) vis a vis a ‘globalization’ process *à l’américaine*. Such process, accompanied with the present political instability, has put in jeopardy the survival of classes, ethnic groups and other cultural identities that have been an integral part of the Mexican nation-state. In the face of these radical political and economic transformations, a call for re-defining the core principles and praxes of Mexico’s national security is of great importance.

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<sup>5</sup>Regarding the concerns of NAFTA and Mexico’s national security see: Paulino Ernesto Arellanes, “El Tratado de Libre Comercio de América del Norte y la seguridad política nacional,” in *Relaciones Internacionales*, Num. 59, Jul/Sep. 1993, UNAM; Maria Cristina Rosas G. “Seguridad Nacional y aspectos estratégico-militares inmersos en el Acuerdo de Libre Comercio entre México, Estados Unidos y Canadá” in *Relaciones Internacionales*, Num. 52, Sep/Dec. 1991, UNAM; John Saxe Fernández, “Aspectos estratégico-militares inmersos en el proyecto de integración de América del Norte,” in *La integración comercial de México a Estados Unidos y Canadá*, México: Siglo XXI, 1991; Luis González Souza, *Soberanía herida (vol.1): México-Estados Unidos* and *Soberanía herida (vol.2): México- Estados Unidos en la hora de la globalización*, México: Editorial Nuestro Tiempo, 1994.

*The end of the José López Portillo regime, the decline of “Revolutionary Nationalism” and the deepening of Mexico’s structural crisis*

Perhaps the most dramatic turning point in Mexico’s contemporary history was the end of the López Portillo regime: The country was bankrupt and the post-revolutionary consensus (which was never as solid as pictured by the PRI) had collapsed. The state found itself with no margins to continue steering the nation’s economic development through the historical path of what was once called the ‘national-revolutionary’ ways. The new regime had to call in the International Monetary Fund to resolve Mexico’s balance of payment problems. Lopez Portillo’s dream of “administering Mexico’s new wealth”<sup>6</sup> derived from the hike in oil prices that had reached US \$32. 08 per barrel in 1981 from US \$10. 89 in 1975 would abruptly become the country’s worst nightmare.<sup>7</sup> The spectacular growth rates of 8.3% in 1978 and 8.2% in 1981 would turn negative for the next decade.<sup>8</sup> The country was experiencing an unsustainable current account deficit that jumped from US \$7.2 billion in 1980 to US\$12.5 billion in 1981. Moreover, a large outflow of capital,<sup>9</sup> added to a sharp rise

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<sup>6</sup>In the 1979 Presidential Address, President López Portillo had stated that Mexico had not just reached its highest levels of growth in the last decade (9.2) but that the “nation would have to learn to administer its wealth,” see: José López Portillo, *III Informe Presidencial*, Mexico: Presidencia de la República, 1979.

<sup>7</sup>See graphics from Roberto Newell G & Luis Rubio F. *Mexico’s Dilemma*. op. cit., fn 1, p. 251 (information quoted from the IMF’s International Financial Statistics, 1982).

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 250.

<sup>9</sup>The capital flights saw their highest peaks in 1981 with an US \$ 8 billion 372.7 loss and a US \$ 6 billion 527.6 in 1982, reaching a net liquidity balance of -1064.4 million US dollars in 1982! See data from: Banco de Mexico, *Informes Anuales 1979-1983*. Graphic compilation in Roberto Newell G. & Luis Rubio F. *Mexico’s Dilemma*, op. cit., Appendix, Table a.15, p. 294.



in US interest rates,<sup>10</sup> were making Mexico's international reserves dwindle to critical levels.<sup>11</sup>

With the popularity of the regime at its peak, particularly among a growing middle class eager to spend, and social expenditures rising, the fiscal deficit was climbing from 5.2% of GDP in 1977 to 14.7% of GDP in 1982.<sup>12</sup> Although the government had to devalue the peso, President López Portillo would passionately state on February 5, 1982 that "he would defend the peso doggedly" ("como un perro"). However, the Bank of Mexico could no longer sustain the drainage from the capital outflows plus the current account deficit and, despite the President's nationalistic discourse, it ended up devaluating the peso on February 18 by more than 50%.

The "revolutionary nationalist" discourse would crumble with a political system extremely divided between those who were pushing for fiscal restraint and a more open economy, and those opposing any exposure of the Mexican economy, particularly after the spectacular discoveries of oil during the late 1970s. As Newell and Rubio stated in *Mexico's Dilemma* (1984): "Mexico had decided to gamble on two prices: that of the debt and that of

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<sup>10</sup>US interest rates had raise from 6.093% (US Medium Term Bond) to 14.6% (MTB) in 1981. See IMF's *International Financial Statistics*, 1982.

<sup>11</sup>The federal government's budget spending rose as a percentage of the GDP from 16.3% in 1977 to 23.0% in 1981. Moreover, the Controlled Budget Spending went from representing 30.6% of the GDP in 1977 to 42.2% of GDP in 1981. For the absolute expenditures in pesos see: Roberto Newell & Luis Rubio, of, cit., p. 249 (sources from NAFINSA and Banco de Mexico). Regarding oil revenues, Mexico had gone from exporting US \$ 8.4 million dollars in 1976 to US \$ 338.4 million dollars IN 1981! See: IMF, *International Financial Statistics*, 1982.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 248 and 282-84.

the oil”.<sup>13</sup>

With regard to national security questions, during the López Portillo regime, Mexico faced a set of external political and military ordeals that were considered a threat to its national security. Likewise, the regime, as we will see, also had a very particular understanding of the concept and practice of national security.

During the 1980s the Cold War was at its ‘hottest’ with Central America plunged in a politico-military crisis that obliged the state to clearly define its national security policies. On the other hand, due to the large oil deposits found on the Gulf of Mexico and the border with Guatemala, the regime had to confront the increasing pressures from the US that, to secure its Strategic Petroleum Reserves (SPR) was demanding an increasing share from such deposits.<sup>14</sup>

Despite such pressures, as Raúl Benítez Manaut states, “Mexico came to see itself as a middle power with a capacity to entertain its own ideas of security.”<sup>15</sup> The articulation of a nationalist discourse supported by a ‘strong’ economy, and a set of objective threats to its national security, gave the state a legitimate rationale for its activism in the Central American crisis as well its opposition toward the bellicose attitude and practices of the Reagan administration. It is important to note that for the first time the concept of National

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 217.

<sup>14</sup>Regarding the re-conceptualization of Mexico’s national security during the eighties as a result of the overwhelming importance of the country’s oil reserves see: John Saxe Fernandez, *Petróleo y estrategia: México y Estados Unidos en el contexto de la política global*, México: Siglo XXI, 1980.

<sup>15</sup>Raúl Benítez Manaut, *op. cit.*, fn 3, p. 73.

Security was mentioned in official documents and considered by scholars as an important subject.<sup>16</sup> In the *Plan Global de Desarrollo* (PGD)(Comprehensive Development Plan), which was the government's policy guideline for the six year presidential period, a section entitled "National Security" appeared. This was the first time that a document of this nature had an explicit section devoted to the very controversial doctrines of "National Security" that were put in place in most Latin American countries. As Benítez Manault notes: "the taboo against speaking of "national security" was broken".<sup>17</sup> As the Comprehensive Development Plan (PGD) stated, the conceptualization of national security was meant to be comprehensive:

"This direct subordination of the armed forces is intended to reaffirm and consolidate Mexico's viability as an independent country. Within our own vision and understanding of Mexican conditions, the defense of our nation's integrity, its independence and its sovereignty translates into *maintenance of constitutional normality* and the *strengthening of Mexico's political institutions*."<sup>18</sup>

The "maintenance of the constitutional normality" is understood in light of the new oil and gas deposits that were to be controlled and exploited solely by the state. In other words, Mexico's national security would have its main support, not in a strong army, but through the acknowledgment of the paramount importance of Article 27 of the Constitution

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<sup>16</sup>The most influential studies at that time regarding the new dimensions of Mexico's national security practices vis a vis the new regional threats and foreign policy possibilities were: Mario Ojeda, *Alcances y límites de la política exterior de México*, México: El Colegio de México, 1980, and John Saxe Fernández, *Petróleo y Estrategia*, op. cit., fn 4.

<sup>17</sup>Raúl Benítez Manault, "Sovereignty, Foreign Policy and National Security in Mexico, 1921-1989," op. cit., p. 74.

<sup>18</sup>Quoted in Raúl Benítez Manault, *Ibidem*. Extract from Chapter 6.3, "Seguridad Nacional," in México, *Plan Global de Desarrollo*, 1980-1982, México: Talleres Gráficos de la Nación, 1980, (emphasis is mine).

which in general terms considers all land and its use as being the sole property of the nation, the inalienability of communal lands and the control of the deposits and exploitation of all natural resources by the state.<sup>19</sup> Moreover, this article was the legal framework that sustained the ideology and practices of the so-called “revolutionary nationalist” discourse and was at the core of a broad national consensus. Regarding the “strengthening of Mexico’s political institutions”, this document referred to the necessity in the new “hot” period of the Cold War, to sustain the particular institutions that kept a strong national consensus. Among such institutions the most important were the agrarian reform, the social security regime, the role of the state, through *Pétroleos Mexicanos* (PEMEX), in exploiting and distributing oil and gas. Likewise, the army would be explicitly submitted to civilian power. With these political and economic ‘locks’, regarded as national security priorities, successive regimes would face tremendous social and political pressures to any attempt at ‘opening’ the economy to regional and/or international economic regimes such as GATT and NAFTA.

Regarding the objective threats to the security of the nation, López Portillo put forward a set of foreign policies designed to boost the state’s image as a regional middle power. The regime’s main objectives were to strengthen Mexico’s regional efforts for a non-military solution to the Central American crisis and, more ambitiously, its efforts to reduce US political and military influence in Latin America. These positions were obviously in direct

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<sup>19</sup>For details of this article plus a historical analysis of the paramount importance of this article for Mexico’s national security articulated with a specific political economy see: Cámara de Diputados, LV Legislatura, Comisión de Régimen Interno y Concertación Política, *Mexicano: Ésta es tu Constitución, texto vigente 1993* (comentaristas: Emilio O. Rabasa y Gloria Caballero), México: Instituto de Investigaciones Legislativas, Comité de Asuntos Editoriales y Grupo Editorial Miguel Ángel Porrúa, 1993, pp. 99-120.

opposition to the US politico-military activities in the region that, led by President Reagan's anti-communist policies, were responding to an East-West perspective of regional conflict rather than a North-South one, as perceived by several Latin American regimes including Mexico's. In response to its national interests, understood within a North-South conflict, the Portillo regime carried out, among other actions, the following:

- It promoted negotiations between President Jimmy Carter and General Omar Torrijos that led to the 1977 Canal Zone Treaties that would be implemented in 1979 to fully restore their sovereignty to Panama by the year 2000.
- The government recognized and openly supported the Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional (FSLN) (Nicaraguan Sandinista Liberation Front) in a direct confrontation with the Reagan administration.
- Regarding the Salvadorean civil war, Mexico pressed for a joint recognition with France (August 28, 1981) to recognize the Frente Democrático Revolucionario-Frente Martí de Liberación Nacional (FDR-FMLN) (Salvador's Marti Liberation Front).
- An enhancement of its relations with Cuba and, as an act of defiance toward the so called East-West perspective, López Portillo organized the North-South Conference or the Cancún Conference in 1981.

Such an independent, and in some cases 'confrontational' foreign policy, was another way of understanding Mexico's national security as being promoted by its new 'middle power' status that was based on a so-called "national revolutionary" foreign policy <sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>For the regime's view of a "national revolutionary" foreign policy see: Porfirio Muñoz Ledo, "Dimensión Internacional del Nacionalismo Revolucionario," in Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, *Política Exterior de México: 175 de Historia* (tomo III), Mexico: Talleres Gráficos de la Nación, 1985.

supported economically by the 'petrolization' of Mexico's politics. As former Secretary of State for External Affairs, Jorge Castañeda bluntly stated:

Mexico acts in international fora as a middle power as a result of its energy resources that the country possesses; for such reason our foreign policy has become an active one.<sup>21</sup>

Moreover, Mexico's active involvement in the Central American crisis was also triggered by the large amounts of refugees that were fleeing from El Salvador, Nicaragua and Guatemala and that, although seeking in great numbers to reach the US and Canada, were also establishing themselves in the bordering state of Chiapas.<sup>22</sup> As a result of such an exodus, particularly from Guatemala, the Guatemalan army, supposedly chasing rebels, constantly carried out incursions into Mexican territory putting in jeopardy the integrity of the nation and the security of its citizens.<sup>23</sup> However, it was the threat of revolutions in Central America spilling over into Chiapas, which had, and still has, the same social and economic problems as those in most Central American states, that provoked efforts to re-conceptualize the understanding and practice of Mexico's national security. Because of the socio-economic conditions that prevailed in the state of Chiapas as well as other Southern states, the threat of

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<sup>21</sup>Mario Ojeda, *op.cit.*, p. 135. First quoted in Ernesto Wong, *La política exterior de México hacia Centroamérica entre 1977 y 1982*. MA Thesis, FLASCO, Mexico City, 1984, p. 87.

<sup>22</sup>Regarding the numbers and conditions of such refugees see: Sergio Aguayo Quesada, *El éxodo Centroamericano*, Mexico: SEP FORO 2000, 1985, as well as Angela Delli-Sante, *Nightmare or Reality: Guatemala in the 1980s*, The Netherlands: Thela Latin America Series, 1996.

<sup>23</sup>Regarding the threats to the territory because of Guatemalan Army incursion to Mexican territory see: Sergio Aguayo Quezada, "La seguridad nacional y la soberanía mexicana entre Estados Unidos y América Central," in Mario Ojeda (ed.) *Las Relaciones de México con lo países de América Central*, Mexico: El Colegio de México, 1985.

a spillover was real. The possibility of a “domino effect”, put the López Portillo regime in a very uncomfortable position: If the social and economic conditions of southern Mexico, which would worsen by the presence of poor Guatemalan natives that had a historical identification with those in Chiapas, were not solved swiftly, Mexico’s “active” foreign policy and its “national revolutionary” discourse and practices would be jeopardized by having to deal by force, with domestic strife.<sup>24</sup> As we shall see, the government was quite conscious that the existing conditions of extreme poverty and marginalization in Chiapas and other southern states could ‘spoil’ the fragile domestic consensus based fundamentally on large revenues from oil exports.

Therefore, in the spirit of ‘maintaining Mexico’s constitutional normality’ and ‘strengthening Mexico’s political institutions’ as well as keeping political stability in areas where the spectacular growth rates were not ‘trickling down’ nation wide and the regional disparities were growing, the government did not hesitate in articulating a new doctrine of national security. The army would be further professionalized and re-deployed toward regions where potential social conflicts could unfold. National security had to be understood, both through an active foreign policy to stabilize a region too close to Mexico to ignore, but also through the pursuit of internal stability. As a response to these concerns, the National Defense College was created, becoming the educational pillar from which some of the more

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<sup>24</sup>For the US perspective on Mexico policy towards the area see Edward Williams, “Mexico’s Central America Policy: National Security Considerations,” in Howard Wiarda (ed.) *Rift and Revolution: The Central American Embroglio*, Washington, DC: The American Enterprise Institute, 1984. Also see from the same author, “The Mexican Military and Foreign Policy: The Evolution of Influence,” and Lt. Col. Alden M. Cunningham, “Mexico’s National Security in the 1980s-1990s,” both in David Ronfeldt (ed.) *The Modern Mexican Military: A Reassessment*, Cal.: Centre for US-Mexican Studies, University of California, San Diego, Monograph series, 15, 1984.

influential doctrines of national security would emerge. The Secretariat of Defense created a set of comprehensive plans for the defense of the territory and its population but also for the maintenance of political stability. These plans were divided into three National Defense Strategies or Plans designed to have as, Benítez Manault states, “a comprehensive concept and practice of national security”.<sup>25</sup> The plans labeled as DN1, DN2 and DN3 have the following characteristics:

- DN1 is a plan to confront external threats. In that sense it is based on the more traditional understandings of national security. The plan was designed to build bridges between the military and the civilian population by creating a compulsory military service.
- DN2 is the most controversial one, for its objective is to manage serious internal threats to social and political stability. Such a plan permits the state to use the military when an internal threat is perceived to jeopardize the fundamental political institutions of the nation-state. The problem with this plan is that it can lead to the misuse of the military (as it happened during the 1968 bloodshed in Tlatelolco). Moreover, after the Mexican Revolution, the army is considered the guarantor of the nation’s territorial integrity and not an instrument for repressing internal dissent. This is a plan that has justified the participation of the military in the struggle against drug trafficking or even, during the present regime (1994-2000), against urban crime or against political dissent. It has been particularly criticized as being a promoter of the Guardias Rurales (rural guards) that have been attached to the PRI and, as will be seen in the Chiapas case, have engaged in outrageous human right violations.
- The DN3 plan is perhaps the most popular one for it refers to helping civil

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<sup>25</sup>Raúl Benítez Manault, *op. cit.*, p. 74.-84. Also see David Ronfeldt , “The Modern Mexican Military: An overview,” in D. Ronfeldt (ed.) *The Modern Mexican Military*, *op. cit.*, fn. 22.



society with problems caused by natural disasters. It is also used in case of social needs derived from extreme poverty or from groups that are marginalized from the rest of the country due to geographic conditions added to a lack of effective communication and transportation systems.

To guarantee their effectiveness as well as popular support, these plans were conceived as integral components of the post-revolutionary political system: They would be supported by an apolitical army fundamentally integrated, from its highest echelons to its rank-and-file, by members of the rural and urban working classes. Moreover, they would be at all times under the absolute control of civil authorities.

In theory, such plans, as operational instruments of the post-revolutionary regimes' understanding of national security, responded to a "national revolutionary" project that included, as a fundamental aspect of the nation's security, a protected economy and a determining role for the state with regard to the control and use of key resources. Regarding foreign policy, "revolutionary nationalism" was based on the following ideological principles expressed by the former Secretary General and ideologue of the PRI and former Permanent Ambassador to the United Nations, Porfirio Muñoz Ledo<sup>26</sup>:

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<sup>26</sup>It is important to note that Porfirio M. Ledo was one of the most important defectors from the PRI that in 1988, when Carlos Salinas was chosen to be the next PRI presidential candidate and the internal consensus had collapsed, decided to organize — with the present Mayor of Mexico City and member of the PRD, Cuathémoc Cárdenas— the FD which a few months later became the PRD and contended in the 1988 presidential race with an apparent victory by its candidate, Cuauthémoc Cardenas, that lost such victory to Salinas by 'a failure' in the electoral computing system. The PRD's political campaign was based on several of these "national revolutionary" principles and, as we will further see, these have once again become very popular as shown by the rise of the PRD's popularity in the July 6, 1997 elections in which the PRD has won the mayorship of Mexico City and has now a strong presence in Congress.

- Nationalism is a vital necessity and is revolutionary because it derives from a social struggle (the Mexican Revolution of 1910-17) that postulates relations of equality among individuals and nations.
- Mexico's nationalism is based on its unique civilization and identity that is in a constant confrontation with its the overwhelming power of its northern neighbor.
- Mexico, as a less powerful nation in military terms, sees "in diplomacy the only and irreplaceable tool for a strategy to preserve its existence and accelerate its progress. . .it constitutes the best defense for the external security of the state and the integrity of the nation."
- Mexico's international actions must be a reflection of our nationalist and revolutionary state.
- Mexico's foreign policy, could not be at the "vanguard" if "the nationalist spirit weakened domestically, our [economic] vulnerability increased and/or the dependency ties were tightened. This is, "revolutionary nationalism demands that all national projects be articulated by a project of national sovereignty."
- The national project is conditioned to a "more favorable external context. . . meaning a substantial modification of the international order".
- A nationalist foreign policy "needs to strengthen the role of the state and the coordination of its government agencies and social sectors so that the community doesn't disintegrate by external forces which are more powerful and intrusive.
- "All relevant decisions must be based on an ample national consensus." <sup>27</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>Porfirio Muñoz Ledo, "Dimension Internacional del Nacionalismo Revolucionario," op. cit., fn 18, pp. 32-36 (Translation is mine).

These ideological principles, added to the traditional doctrines of Mexico's foreign policy, as well as an all-encompassing participation of the state in the economy, were supposed to be the main ideological and political supports for Mexico's national security doctrine. However, as the López Portillo regime was coming to an end, his policy mistakes were proving the weaknesses of such ideological principles. The traditional internal stability of the PRI was beginning to show signs of exhaustion and the middle class, which was the hardest hit by the 'debt crisis' would start questioning the legitimacy of the PRI's revolutionary and nationalist discourse. The conditions of those in extreme poverty as well as those historically marginalized by the state as were the indigenous peoples were obviously not being ameliorated by all the 'new wealth' that was pouring into the coffers of the economic and political elites that were supposed to ensure the 'revolutionary' and 'nationalist' state.

The main structural problem derived from the López Portillo regime was that the expansion of the economy, based on a spectacular growth in revenues, was never articulated with the rest of the economy. The fact is that the national economic structures, by depending on one resource, were actually becoming more vulnerable to a very unstable international oil market. The expansion of the economy became more and more dependent on oil exports and, as a result of the over-specialization in one resource, such growth was dramatically aborted by the limits of the state's export capacity as well as the international demands. On the other hand, the revenues obtained by such exports were mainly transferred into private hands that, with high domestic and international interest rates, set the conditions for a very speculative economy. The state would relax its protectionist measures, the domestic market would be

flooded by sumptuous products to be consumed by a self-gratified middle class.<sup>28</sup> The contradictions of Mexico's structural domestic and international dependencies could no longer be concealed by a discourse that, although enjoyed a reasonable level of legitimacy between the 'nationalist' fractions of the PRI and the left (at least regarding foreign policy), did not create the long demanded political and economic conditions to alleviate such structures of dependency and their devastating social impact.

The so called "revolutionary family" was experiencing a set of internal divisions that, after the economic and social consequences of the February 1982 peso devaluation, the debt crisis and the nationalization of the banks announced in President Portillo's last address to the Union, had begun the collapse of the post revolutionary system. The state had absolutely no financial power or legitimacy, particularly among the business and middle class, to advocate in the upcoming elections the virtues of an economic policy based on a strong interventionist state or on an independent "national revolutionary" foreign policy. If the traditional system was betting on its survival, it needed to present some kind of "rescue" plan that at that time could only contemplate an undesired but badly needed intervention of another kind than that of the state: that of the International Monetary Fund.

This meant that the new candidate for the PRI would be picked from those who,

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<sup>28</sup>For details of the structural consequences of the 'petrolization' of Mexico's economy see: Jaime Ros, "La crisis económica: un análisis general", in Pablo González Casanova & Héctor Aguilar Camín (cords.) *México ante la crisis: El Contexto internacional y la crisis económica*, Mexico: Editorial Siglo XXI, 1987.

although they did not master the revolutionary discourse, could perhaps ‘administer the crisis’. The doors for a new breed of Mexican politicians would be opened: The *Tecnócratas* or ‘technocrats’ would enter through the gates of the Presidency. The former Secretary of State for Planning and Budget (SPP), Miguel de la Madrid, would be handed the task to ‘restructure’ and ‘adjust’ Mexico’s economy. His task would not be based any more on a “revolutionary nationalist” discourse but on one ‘supported’ by the IMF’s Structural Adjustment Plan (SAP) ‘manuals’. And, in the context of our thesis, the question that is crucial is the following: how did this change affect both the conceptualization and the practice of Mexico’s national security?

*The Miguel de la Madrid presidency (1982-1988). Managing the transition from a protected economy to neoliberalism: a ‘technocratic’ solution for an ailing economy*

When Miguel de la Madrid came to power on December 1, 1982, he would face not only an economy at the verge of a total collapse but also an erosion of legitimacy vis a vis the traditional supporters of the system. The state did not count anymore with the ‘mighty’ power of oil to contend with such an economic crisis. The international oil market experienced saturation; prices could no longer be sustained at the levels they reached between 1975 and 1981 (the average price per barrel during those years was US \$ 17.6).<sup>29</sup> Moreover, the enormous accumulation of capital in the international financial markets due to the unprecedented exports of oil, ignited a frenzy among countries like Mexico to contract large

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<sup>29</sup>For the periodized prices see: Roberto Newell G. & Luis Rubio F., op. cit., p. 251.

credits that would set the conditions for an international inflationary environment and the swelling of their public debts. To make matters worse, countries like Mexico were confronting a set of protectionist measures from most industrialized countries that saw the value of their imports decline by at least six percent in 1982.<sup>30</sup> Although in such adverse conditions the state has an undisputed role in articulating domestic and foreign policies for the sake of keeping sufficient levels of domestic economic and political stability, in the case of Mexico, the state was dramatically losing its economic and political autonomy for it was confronting, among other challenges, the following: 1) an increasing trans-nationalization of capital with no state control; 2) the internationalization of production and labor which meant strong pressures to keep salaries depressed to attract Foreign Direct Investment (FDI); 3) the dislocation of an already quite depressed agricultural sector as seen by a retrenchment of state participation (exemplified by a 76% decline in public investment from 1982 to 1989<sup>31</sup>; 4) a Cold War that was extremely “hot” in Central America and therefore diverting the state’s focus on some key domestic issues, and 5) as, J. Estévez pointed out, “the multilateral economic organizations, in particular the International Monetary Fund that were using all the tools at their disposal to impede, or at least attenuate, a renewal of Latin-American

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<sup>30</sup>In Jaime Estévez, “Crisis mundial y proyecto nacional,” in Pablo González Casanova & Héctor Aguilar Camín (cords.), *México ante la crisis: El Contexto internacional y la crisis económica*, op. cit., fn. 27, p. 49.

<sup>31</sup>This retrenchment which was translated in a decline of the agriculture’s share of GDP to 5%, down from 20% in 1950 as well as a negative trade balance in agricultural products, particularly products such as coffee that was the pillar of the economic structures of states like Chiapas, also meant an increase in social and economic inequalities. This became a serious security issue when it is considered that 26% of Mexico’s economically active population remains in the rural sector. See: Manuel Pastor and Carol Wise, “State Policy, Distribution and Neoliberal Reform in Mexico,” in *Journal of Latin American Studies*, Vol. 29, part 2, May 1997, pp. 419-455.

nationalism<sup>32</sup>.

It was clear that the Reagan administration would not accept the 'relative decline' of the US that had began in the 1970s. His administration's main commitment was not just to secure the US hegemonic economic and political projects born after the Second World War but, at least for Latin America and most of the Third World, to reconstruct American world politico-military supremacy. For this, Reagan's administration would spare no efforts. Three main policies would be deployed by the US: 1) a disproportionate and intimidating use of military power; 2) a monetary policy that accelerated the drainage of capital from most of the Less Developed Countries and, 3) as a counterbalance of force as well as a tool for 'consensus', the use of multilateral organizations such as the IMF and World Bank. As Gramsci noted regarding the foundations of 'supremacy':

The supremacy of a social group manifests itself in two ways, as "domination" and as 'intellectual and moral leadership'. A social group dominates antagonistic groups, which it tends to liquidate, or subjugate perhaps even by armed force; it leads kindred and allied groups.<sup>33</sup>

In the case of Mexico the use of force to "dominate antagonistic groups" was, contrary to what was happening in Central America in the 1980s and in most Latin American states during the 1970s, counter to the security of the US and therefore its hegemonic project. An increase in social and political repression in Mexico can be reflected in a large flow of Mexicans across the US border. On the other hand, the whole maquiladora sector as well as the US transnational sector based in Mexico would be in peril if there were to be a spillover

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<sup>32</sup>Ibid., p. 53.

<sup>33</sup>Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, op. cit., p. 57.

of violent conflict in such sectors. Moreover, if repression were applied to a powerful union such as PEMEX's, the security of oil deposits, that are of an unlimited value for the US strategic reserves would be jeopardized. Finally, Mexico has represented, particularly since the late 1980s and 1990s, a strategic bridge for the further development of a continental free trade zone.

However, the use of other measures such as: a) Mexico's protectionist policies articulated with a very aggressive migration policy, b) a monetarist policy with an overvalued dollar which raised the value of Mexico's debt, and c) a forceful 'liberalization' and 'deregulation' of the economy through the IMF and World Bank (IBRD) that were the best instruments to assure the US that "revolutionary nationalism" would not be revived and *mutatis mutandis* internal US pressures to guarantee the expansion of US capital would be somewhat alleviated.

Added to the internal and external political pressures, the De la Madrid regime had to announce in August 1982 the state's inability to meet scheduled payments from its \$ 80 billion external debt. Although the IMF intervened first with a \$ 4 billion US "rescue package" or Extended Fund Facility and later in 1986 with a \$ 16 billion US credit attached with a second Letter of Intent, the spillover from this debt crisis into other Latin American countries showed that the levels of interdependency, particularly regarding the financial markets, were to have a dramatic impact on the future economic foreign policies of most of the continent's states.

The IMF's "rescue packages" were expressed by an austerity plan or 'shock' policy called the Immediate Program for Economic Reorganization (Programa Inmediato de



Reordenación Económica, PIRE) which would have very high social and political costs: the state had to cut a number of social program that was keeping alive whatever consensus was left at the level of the middle and working classes (urban and rural). Before we understand how such social and political costs have had an impact on Mexico's national security, we should outline the main macroeconomic goals of the PIRE, these being the following:

- To control the public deficit that in 1982 accounted for more than 16.5% of the GDP.
- To service a debt that represented at least 120% of the GDP.
- To dismantle the exchange controls and reestablish a dual exchange rate system in which there would be a free rate set daily by the supply and demand of dollars and a controlled rate applied for government approved transactions such as debt-service payments on foreign debt contracted before 1982 and for the imports of essential capital and raw material inputs.
- To increase prices of most goods (reaching an inflation of 103% in 1985) and taxes (the Value Added Tax hiked from 10% to 15%) .
- To attract back capital flows through a monetary policy of high interest rates.
- To open the economy to international competition which was implemented by Mexico's adherence to GATT in 1986.
- To promote, through a concerted effort between the public and private sectors, non-petroleum exports via the increase in the establishment of *maquiladoras*, or assembly operations along the US-Mexican border.
- To relax the 1973 Foreign Investment Law to encourage foreign investment and technology and,
- to substantially reduce state-led economic initiatives and power, through a comprehensive privatization plan in which the state would sell more than 40% of the public sector firms or *paraestatales* plus 34% of the assets from the nationalized banks (as Nora Hamilton researched and reported, such assets

which were supposed to be sold to the public were actually ‘returned’ to the former bankers through large, invisible portfolios which only the wealthiest Mexicans were able to purchase)<sup>34</sup>.

Although it is important to admit that such policies were not intended to diminish the autonomy of the state or to put in jeopardy the security of its citizens, but were an “emergency” response to former policy mistakes, as well as to pressures derived from a specific hegemonic project, it is fundamental for us to ask the following questions: 1) Can a gap be identified, as a result of the internal divisions within the PRI and the state, between the traditional discourse and practice of national security both in domestic and foreign policy? 2) How did these policies, that were not taken by “an ample national consensus” affect the legitimacy of the regime? And finally, 3) if the state had registered such a dramatic loss of its political and economic autonomy, how was it to “maintain” its “constitutional normality” and “strengthen” the political institutions that gave some social and political stability to the more polarized states such as Chiapas?

National security during the De la Madrid years, contrary to what was expected, did not register any radical changes from earlier notions and practices. The Central American crisis was deepening: the Reagan administration was committed to overthrowing the Sandinista Revolution in Nicaragua by openly supporting the Contras and mining several

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<sup>34</sup>See Nora Hamilton, “State-Class Alliances and Conflicts,” in *Latin American Perspectives* 11, Num. 4, fall 1984, p. 25. For a historical review regarding the politics of the privatization process see: Judith Teichman, *Privatization and Political Change in Mexico*, Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1995.

Nicaraguan ports; the civil war in El Salvador was tipping the balance of power in favor of the FMLN, and in Guatemala, the Rios Montt regime was literally, with the support of the CIA, carrying out a genocide against the Mayan peoples who were fleeing the country by the thousands.<sup>35</sup>

While the internal divisions in Mexico's political system were quite intense regarding the political economy to be followed, the general position of the main political actors was to find a peaceful solution to a conflict that was having a dangerous impact on Mexico's southern social and political stability. On the other hand, not even the most neoliberal of the cabinet members from the De la Madrid administration could buy, at least openly, the extremely vociferous and hysterical anti-communist discourse of the Reagan administration. And even if some members of the cabinet would have, in private, some sympathy towards the East-West discourse, the fragile consensus between the nationalist and revolutionary sectors of the political system (including the organized labor as well as the independent unions and left wing parties) and the technocrats could not afford any slip from a very weakened regime that, at an electoral level, based its survival on the rural vote as well as the organized labor vote. Moreover, the Central American crisis was a politico-military conjuncture that, added to the militaristic attitude of the US toward the region, touched the most sensitive historical memories of Mexico and therefore was interpreted as being directly related to Mexico's national security. In a most surprising statement made on the Day of the National Heroes

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<sup>35</sup>Regarding the involvement of the CIA in Guatemala's genocide see: William Blum, "Guatemala 1962 to 1980s: A Less Publicized Final Solution", in William Blum, *Killing Hope: US Military and CIA Interventions Since World War II*, US: Common Courage Press, 1995, pp.229-239, and Delli-Sante, *Nightmare or Reality: Guatemala In the 1980s*, op. cit., fn. 21.

from the 1946–48 Mexico-U.S. War (Día de los Niños Héroes) on September 13, 1983 De la Madrid bluntly stated that, “Any attempt against peace, especially when it involves our brother nations, is a threat to the peace of all Mexicans”. The president concluded by saying that Mexico “suffers from great needs, but with no doubt, it is a stronger nation, more vigorous, and one that knows how to defend itself better than that injured nation that in the last century was at the verge of disintegrating by external aggressions or by internal conflicts, that Mexicans themselves didn’t always know how to resolve.”<sup>36</sup> Beyond its rhetorical aspects, this statement clearly expressed the regime’s concern with the dangerous escalation of the politico-military situation provoked, not by the East-West conflict, but by Reagan’s obsession with a communist threat that would spread all over its “back yard”. This was also a discourse that expressed a very clever management of the “national revolutionary” discourse, which, at a foreign policy level, could keep the necessary internal political stability to begin the transition toward an open economy and a new relationship with the US.

However, the regime could no longer display an independent, and in some cases confrontational, foreign policy: its internal conditions, particularly those in Chiapas, plus its need to diversify and strengthen its multilateral network, pushed the regime to contemplate a more sophisticated set of alliances to counter the US position in Central America. Moreover, De la Madrid’s administration was reluctant to use the Organization of the American States (OAS) collective security structures such as the 1947 Rio Treaty or Inter-American Treaty for Reciprocal Assistance (ITRA); because Mexico never shared its pro-

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<sup>36</sup>Quoted in Adolfo Aguilar Zinser, “México y Centroamérica,” in Pablo González Casanova & Héctor Aguilar Camín, *México ante la crisis*, op. cit., p. 105 (translation is mine).

American Cold War *raison d'être*. As a response to such external and domestic pressures, the De la Madrid regime promoted the formation of the "Contadora Group", (Colombia, Mexico, Panama and Venezuela). This was perhaps the first multilateral agreement, without US patronage, that in Latin American contemporary history was put forward to find a solution to a regional conflict. The Contadora Group, which had the support of the European Union, Canada and other industrialized countries as well as most of the Non-aligned Movement or G-77 was the only medium for establishing a concerted dialogue between the belligerent forces. Between 1983 and 1986, this multilateral Group became the regional broker and, with Mexico as a key actor, the forum from which the Salvadorean Civil War would start to be resolved.<sup>37</sup>

Mexico's national security would be, therefore, pursued through the continuation of an active foreign policy even as the extreme international pressures added to the economic quagmire in which the whole nation was immersed. The justification was stated as follows by the Mexican Secretary of State for External Relations:

We act with the conviction that an active foreign policy is not a privilege of world powers, but a capacity and right of all nations that, by standards founded in responsibility, participate in the international community of states to preserve a convenient, just and harmonious coexistence.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup>Regarding Mexico's influence within the Contadora Group see Raul Benítez Manault, "Civil War in el Salvador and Efforts to Achieve Peace," in Kumar Rupesinghe (ed.), *Internal Conflict and Governance*, New York: St. Martin Press, 1992. Also see Mario Ojeda, *México: El Surgimiento de una política exterior activa*, op. cit.

<sup>38</sup>Quoted in Mario Ojeda, *México: El Surgimiento de una política exterior activa*, op. cit., p. 181. From México, Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, Primer Informe del Secretario de Relaciones Exteriores, 1o de Septiembre de 1983-31 de agosto de 1984, México, Septiembre de 1984. (Translation is mine).

Another example of the regime's active foreign policy was the creation of a common front for Latin America's debtor states. The extent of the Mexican debt crisis and its impact on Latin American and other Third World Countries opened up the question of responsibilities: the international financial community as well as several industrialized states could no longer accept the assumption that the full responsibility fell on the debtors, but recognized that creditors had also a great deal of responsibility. This of course, was not a benevolent response but an obliged reaction toward a world wide crisis that was clearly affecting the economic interests of most industrialized nations. As Mario Ojeda states, "Miguel de la Madrid fully realized this situation and decided to capitalize on his weakness as a powerful tool to bargain, for both debtors and creditors were prisoners—paradoxically— of the situation".<sup>39</sup> Under the thesis of "co-responsibility" that would later be conceptualized as that of "Collective Economic Security", Mexico, with other Latin American countries agreed to form a 'front' to articulate a set of regional policies vis a vis international capital markets as well as some key multilateral economic organizations. On January 1984 in Quito, Ecuador, the first Latin American Economic Conference (CELA) was created to find a response to the debt crisis. The main points from this conference were that the responsibility for the unsustainable debts of most Latin American countries had to be shared not just between these states and the international financial system but also with the debtor countries that themselves had clearly pointing out the political and social risks caused by the extremely harsh conditions to service such gargantuan debts.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>39</sup>Ibid., p.190 (translation is mine).

<sup>40</sup>See CEPAL, *Servicio de Información*, Num. 389/390, Santiago de Chile, January 1984.

In 1984, Miguel De la Madrid carried out one of his most ambitious and constructive trips through Latin America. He visited Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Panama and Venezuela. All five states had taken the decision that the first country to be helped would be Argentina which, after the Malvinas/Falkland War had reached a debt burden of \$42 billion. The urgency was that Argentina's deadline to pay 500 million dollars in its debt service was close and the new democratically elected President, Raúl Alfonsín, faced a similar liquidity crisis to Mexico's.<sup>41</sup> The operation, which also was supported by the Inter-American Bank for Development (IABD), was a success and, and on June of the same year the Cartagena Consensus Group was formed with the first five countries of the Quito conference plus Peru and Ecuador.

Although this very active foreign policy had more modest results than those of Contadora Group, it did help maintain with the latter, a certain level of domestic consensus. However, the need for fresh flows of capital was pushing the regime to reconsider the traditional political economy that was fundamentally closed to international competitiveness. The decision to become a member of GATT in 1986, although it would fracture the fragile consensus, particularly with the small and medium industries organized in a nation-wide chamber called the Cámara Nacional de la Industria de la Transformación (CANACINTRA) as well as with the corporate peasant and blue collar structures represented by the Consejo Nacional Campesino (CNC) and the Congreso de los Trabajadores Mexicanos (CTM), was the only way to boost the export sector of the economy.

If the regime's foreign policy was not just very active but also permeated by a strong

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<sup>41</sup>Mario Ojeda, *op. cit.*, fn 38, p. 192.

nationalist discourse, its domestic policy was plagued with contradictions and a lack of sensitivity towards those social sectors that were hit the hardest by the austerity measures and an economy that during most of the decade had a negative growth. This lack of sensitivity was particularly acute during the 1985 earthquake in which the government's response showed how divorced it was from the rest of the population. For example, the DN3 plan was deployed late, poorly coordinated and infested with practices of corruption. This conjuncture was perhaps the most important turning point for Mexico's feeble civil society: confronted with the total incompetence of the authorities in charge of the relief operations, civil society organized hundreds of rescue brigades that took charge of the situation. On the other hand, several people, who had suffered from tortures, were found in the prison cells of the Secretariat of the Interior (SG), provoking a national outrage that further eroded an already very weak political legitimacy.<sup>42</sup>

The fact is that the social consequences of the 1982 debt crisis plus the austerity measures had a long lasting impact both on the urban and rural working classes. Dire cuts in production plus a de-capitalized agricultural sector pushed unemployment from a level of 4.2 percent in 1982 to 14 percent in 1984.<sup>43</sup> Moreover, those numbers varied drastically by

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<sup>42</sup>It is estimated that the earthquake killed between 8,000 and 10,000 people, left 150,000 people homeless and inflicted property damages of close to 5 billion. Because of the inept handling of the crisis there were numerous charges of corruption levied against the government. On the other hand, perhaps the most damaging event to the legitimacy of the regime was the discovery of eight tortured victims in the ruins of the basement of the judicial police building. For details regarding its effects on the renewal of Mexico's civil society see: Wayne A. Cornelius, *The Political Economy of Mexico Under the De la Madrid: The Crisis Deepens, 1985-1986*, San Diego: Center for US-Mexican Studies, University of California, 1986, p.33-35. Also see: *Wall Street Journal*, September 26, 1985, p. 8.

<sup>43</sup>This data, which is not the official one is based on a different calculus led by the University of California described in Wayne A. Cornelius, *The Political Economy of Mexico Under De la*



region; in the northern states unemployment was at 13 percent, Mexico City registered an 8 percent.<sup>44</sup> However, in states like Chiapas unemployment reached 22 percent, with 42 percent of the those employed receiving on income lower than the national minimum salary (less than \$3 dollars a day), which really is translated to almost 64% with no real income! It is important to note that this tendency in Chiapas' employment structure has prevailed until our present.<sup>45</sup> The numbers of jobs lost during the 1982-84 period is calculated at over 2 million.<sup>46</sup>

Moreover, inflation rates rose to more than 100%, with interest rates to match, unemployment levels in 1984 reached 3 million people out of 25 million of the EAP and there was an accumulated loss of at least 60% of the purchasing power of the minimum salaries. To make things worse, the country had lost its self-sufficiency in key agricultural products.

The de-capitalization of the agricultural sector was becoming a serious problem, particularly since Mexico's agricultural production fell to 2.0% in the 1980s, therefore not being able to match the food needs of birth rates that, from 1966 to 1984, were annually of 3.4%. The vulnerability of the state in the agro-industrial sector was best seen in the ratio of imports to total supply. From being self-sufficient in products such as corn and wheat, the state saw the need to increase in 25% the imports of these products. For example, In 1983,

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*Madrid*, op. cit., p. 32-33.

<sup>44</sup>Miguel D. Ramírez, *Mexico's Economic Crisis: Its Origins and Consequences*, New York: Praeger, 1989, p. 109.

<sup>45</sup>For 1984 data see *Ibid.*, chapter titled "Mexico". For a historical perspective regarding employment rates in Chiapas all the way to 1994 see: Alejandro Favela, "Chiapas: Diversas Opciones," in *Economía Informa*, Num. 227, March 1994, pp. 23-29.

<sup>46</sup>For further detail see: Francisco J. Alejo, "Demographic Patterns and Labor Market Trends in Mexico," in Donald L. Wyman (ed.) *Mexico's Economic Crisis: Challenges and Opportunities*, San Diego: Center for US-Mexican Studies, University of California, 1983, pp. 79-89.

more than 9 million tons of food had to be imported at a cost of \$1.5 billion dollars, a sum that represented 30% of the external debt contracted for that year.<sup>47</sup> Likewise, the data from 1984 showed that at least 88% of the total rural population was undernourished and that 92% of children under 14 years showed signs of critical undernourishment.<sup>48</sup> Unfortunately these numbers have not changed for states like Chiapas, and represent a human security threat of unmeasurable consequences.

With these very acute social and economic problems, it would appear almost impossible that the traditional 'nationalist' discourse continue to guarantee a sufficient level of national unity. These factors, added to the deteriorating social and economic conditions of Mexico's south, set the conditions for social and political tensions that erupted in radical and violent political manifestations. At the level of national/state consensus, a critical gap was prompted by a very "active" and "nationalist" discourse and practice in foreign policy opposed to a neoliberal, and at times, very authoritarian domestic policy. This contradiction was provoking a serious dislocation between foreign and domestic policies that, among other issues, precipitated the following crises:

1) An even deeper regionalization of the nation: The centralization of political power and the unequal distribution of wealth were creating a geopolitical map that presented serious challenges for a 'comprehensive' conceptualization and practice of national security. As Roger Bartra stated, "As nationalism goes hand in hand with centralism, it is evident that any

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<sup>47</sup>For details see: Fernando Rello, "La crisis agroalimentaria," in Pablo Gonzalez Casanova & Hector Aguilar Camin, *Mexico ante la crisis*, op. cit., pp.220-23.

<sup>48</sup>*Ibid.*

change in the correlation of forces that increases the power of the provinces affects the principles from which nationalism and national security are propped up.”<sup>49</sup>

2) An intensification of class struggles in which the working classes saw a misuse of the traditional “nationalist” discourse and a complete incongruence between the latter and the regime’s labor policies. The result was a rise of state repression accompanied by more profound class cleavages and higher levels of social and political instability.

3) A disjuncture between the hegemonic project of the neoliberal elites that controlled the key secretariats (i.e. the future president, Carlos Salinas de Gortari, the most devoted neoliberal, was the Secretary of Planning and Budget) and the electoral base of the PRI.

4) A loss of legitimacy and consensus from a state that was not only losing autonomy vis a vis an international order afflicted with protectionism and regional conflict but also vis a vis a growing civil society that, although quite fragmented by regional disparities, was becoming conscious of its political and economic role.

5) A deepening of the contradictions and tensions between a paternalistic/authoritarian state and the indigenous peoples that, being the most marginalized of society, could barely survive from their increasingly desperate economic conditions. In the case of Chiapas, as we shall see, these contradictions, heightened with the presence of thousands of Guatemalan refugees, generated both the objective and subjective conditions for what ten years later was

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<sup>49</sup>See Roger Bartra, “Nacionalismo Revolucionario y Seguridad Nacional,” in Sergio Aguayo Quezada & Bruce M. Bagley, *En Busca de la Seguridad Perdida: Aproximaciones a la Seguridad Nacional Mexicana*, Mexico: Siglo XXI, 1990, p. 156. (Translation is mine).

to become the Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (EZLN).<sup>50</sup>

The traditional nationalist discourse could only be kept alive at the level of foreign policy. Domestically, the system was eroding and triggering a new interpretation of such 'nationalist' and 'revolutionary' discourse. The ideology of national unity, so ardently promoted by the PRI, was a myth that began collapsing faced with a social and political reality that could no longer sustain its nationalist discourse. How could a system, that was domestically 'closed' and quite authoritarian while internationally 'open' and pluralist, continue promoting a discourse that was expressing a regime in a schizophrenic state? As Bartra stated regarding the state of nationalism after the debt crisis,

Nationalism has become the symbol of an authoritarian political regime that has not been able to establish a solid economy or has avoided its transnationalization. Today, despite revolutionary nationalism, millions of Mexicans live in the US not only at the margins of democracy but also of the law. And many other millions in Mexico are in a very similar situation: their vote is manipulated by the authoritarian system. Moreover, they live in an economy in crisis against which ballots can't do anything; the inflationary processes, or those linked to the external debt, are everyday more detached from the national arena.<sup>51</sup>

The national security consequences of the increasing disjuncture between a nationalism based on an authoritarian and corrupted system and a civil society that was being forced to pay the bills for mistakes made by a political and economic elite that was becoming more and more insensitive toward its traditional electoral base, were very serious: Beyond

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<sup>50</sup>In several interviews with the "subcomandante" Marcos as well as in various political statements from the EZLN, which we will further see in detail, the movement had its origins in 1984 which was in the midst of the economic contraction and the peak of the Guatemalan refugee crisis. For a compendium of such statements in English see: John Ross & Frank Bardacke (eds), *Shadow's of Tender Fury: The Letters and Communiqués of Subcomandante Marcos and the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN)*, New York: Monthly Review Press, 1995.

<sup>51</sup>Roger Bartra, "Nacionalismo revolucionario y seguridad nacional," op. cit., p. 169. (Translation is mine).

the conjunctural problems caused by the Central American crisis, the political elite increasingly found threats to the national security in those social forces that were opposed to the 'technocratic' leadership of the PRI and its neoliberal policies. On the other hand, the closed nature of the political system was, with an increase in Mexico's role as the most important bridge for the traffic of illegal drugs to the US, eroding the security structures that were meant to protect the integrity of the territory plus its citizens. Finally, national security was swiftly being transformed into state or regime security.

The social and political consequences of the "shock therapy" were creating what Bartra called "a culture of security".<sup>52</sup> The De la Madrid regime implemented, at any social cost, IMF structural adjustments supposedly meant to create new and better economic structures that would: a) service a never ending debt and, b) create the structural conditions for Mexico's full integration into the post-fordist regime of accumulation regionally led by the United States. Moreover, national security was to be found not in a radical 'opening' of the system but in the radical implementation of such economic adjustments. In other words, as Sergio Aguayo Quezada suggests, pluralism and democracy became a challenge to a narrowly defined concept and practice of national security.<sup>53</sup> The stubbornness of the De la Madrid regime had heightened the latent social tensions to a level that was pushing the government to increase its control and vigilante activities to prevent tendencies that were

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<sup>52</sup>Ibid., p. 170.

<sup>53</sup>Sergio Aguayo Quezada, "Usos, abusos y retos de la seguridad nacional, in Sergio A. Quezada & Bruce Michael Bagley, (eds.) *En busca de la seguridad perdida*, op. cit., p. 135.

perceived as posing a threat to the *state*.<sup>54</sup> As a result of the regime's perception of threats coming from the interior plus the growing corruption of the security forces due to the rising power of the Mexican drug cartels, in 1985, by presidential decree, the Dirección General de Investigación y Seguridad Nacional (General Bureau of Investigations and National Security) (DGISN) was created to fulfill the tasks of the former Dirección Federal de Seguridad (Federal Bureau of Security) (DFS) and the Dirección General de Investigaciones Políticas y Sociales (General Bureau of Political and Social Investigations) (DGIPS).<sup>55</sup> The De la Madrid's administration centralized and fused political and social threats with those derived from criminal activities such as illegal drug trafficking, therefore treating social and political problems as criminal ones.

At the end of the De la Madrid regime, national security was focused on keeping and strengthening the neoliberal policies at any cost. This meant that the next PRI candidate for the presidency would be an even more eager technocrat. It also meant that the expected political changes in the federal electoral system and in the PRI's internal system for choosing its candidate would have to wait. To choose the next candidate, De la Madrid had put forward a mockery that enraged several of the more nationalist members of the party.<sup>56</sup> What

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<sup>54</sup>Regarding the vigilante and control mechanisms of governments that clearly differentiate threats to the state but not to the nation see Frank Donner, *The Age of Surveillance*, New York: Vintage Books, 1981.

<sup>55</sup>See Sergio Aguayo Quezada, *op. cit.*, p. 121.

<sup>56</sup>De la Madrid had decided to 'open' the race for the PRI presidential candidate by picking 'six distinguished' cabinet members and opening a set of informal debates, not among the chosen 'six' but among other 'distinguished' members of the business community as well as from the corporate structures of the party. Such 'debates' were really a series of breakfasts that were hosted by an individual candidate, the president and influential 'leaders' of the party as well as CEO's from companies that were traditionally supportive of the PRI/state structures.

was a move to 'open' the system became an even deeper fracture that seriously destabilized the political system. When it was known that the chosen candidate would be Carlos Salinas de Gortari, one of the most outspoken neo-liberals in the cabinet, a fraction of key PRI members vociferously announced their resignation and the formation of a new front to contend against him. The new front called Frente Democrático (Democratic Front) (FD) swiftly organized a coalition of center-left wing parties that became the Partido de la Revolución Democrática or Democratic Revolution Party (PRD) and, with a revived anti-neoliberal and 'nationalist' discourse, rallied around the son of the former President Lázaro Cárdenas (1934-1940), who had nationalized the oil industry on March 18, 1938.

The 1988 elections were perhaps the most questioned elections in Mexico's history. The PRD candidate, Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, was apparently winning the elections when the very trumpeted modern counting system had suddenly shut down. When the system was reestablished after a week's delay, ballots were found "floating down rivers and smoldering in roadside bonfires", and the army had burned most of the ballots that had been kept in the Congress building. Despite these illegal acts, the vote count would give the victory, by a slight margin of 50.7%, to Carlos Salinas de Gortari.<sup>57</sup> The manifestations that followed were perhaps the most ardent since 1968. Salinas took power in a nation-wide environment of

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<sup>57</sup>Although the 1988 electoral fraud was never officially proven, it was finally acknowledged in 1994 by a statement from Arturo Nuñez, the former head of the Federal Electoral Institute, Nuñez had stated that: "unidentified officials had deliberately crashed the system." The statement appeared in Tod Robberson, "Salinas' Election Still at Issue as New Vote Nears," *The Washington Post*, July 27, 1994. For the results and their analysis see Peter H. Smith, "The 1988 Presidential Succession in Historical Perspective," in Wayne Corenelius, Judith Gentleman and Peter H. Smith (eds.) *Mexico's Alternative Political Futures*, San Diego, CA: Center for US-Mexican Studies, University of California, San Diego, 1989.

distrust and anger that pushed his regime to reinforce the “culture of security”.

However, beyond the new national security policies that, as we shall see, would be mainly domestic, his image toward the exterior would be ‘embellished’ by a sophisticated and expensive marketing campaign. Domestically, although he would reinforce the structural changes with their worsening social costs, he was committed to sell, at any price, the dream of becoming full members of the First World.

Underlying this new regime was an open discourse that would challenge the traditional ‘revolutionary nationalism’ both domestically and internationally. However, as Roger Bartra farsightedly stated:

The danger of substituting the traditional nationalism by a culture of security is real. This could move toward a dangerous escalade, for we know very well that the cult of security ends up favoring the expansion of insecurity.<sup>58</sup>

*The presidency of Carlos Salinas de Gortari (1988-1994): The closure of “revolutionary nationalism” and the full ‘opening’ of a neoliberal project*

“Revolutionary nationalism”, as a political and economic discourse and practice found its definitive closure with the Salinas’ regime. The process of economic liberalization, begun in 1982, was finally linked to a new political discourse. The breakdown of the PRI’s internal consensus had tipped the balance of power on the side of those who believed in the need to accelerate the process of economic “modernization”. “Modernization” was unquestionably a bid to mold Mexico’s economic structures on the basis of neoliberalism; the political and

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<sup>58</sup>Roger Bartra, “Nacionalismo revolucionario y seguridad nacional,” op. cit., p. 170. (Translation is mine).



social structures, with their increasing internal tensions, would have to wait for the latter to 'mature'. For Salinas and his 'technocratic' cabinet, the solution to Mexico's cyclical economic and social crises was to be found in the strict application of a political economy based on monetarism, free trade, 'competitiveness' and the privatization of capital at all levels. For Salinas, the modernization process was meant to "strengthen Mexico in the global context and improve the coexistence among Mexicans . . .to create a viable economy in a strongly competitive international environment and thus to generate employment and opportunities for all. . .to forge a more just, more generous, more valuable society for each one of us, more respected in the world."<sup>59</sup> Well intentioned as these purposes were, however, the political environment, from the first day Carlos Salinas took office, was one of political confrontation and instability in which the economic reforms would be implemented with a maintenance and reinforcement of what Enrique Krauze has pertinently called the "Imperial Presidency".<sup>60</sup> The political dialogues between the Presidency and the social and political forces would be strictly orchestrated by the very powerful Office of the Presidency and excluded any social or political actors that openly questioned the regime's political economy. The PRD, which apparently had won the presidential elections, and any organization against neoliberalism and free trade, had been 'blacklisted' and cut off from 'national' debates concerning the economic and social outcomes of the radical reforms that were being

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<sup>59</sup>Salinas de Gortari, *Segundo Informe Presidencial, 1990* México, D.F.: Secretaría de la Presidencia, 1990, p. 1. (Translation is mine).

<sup>60</sup>For the way Salinas concentrated power in his person see "Carlos Salinas: El hombre que sería rey (Carlos Salinas: The man who would be king)", in Enrique Krauze, *La presidencia imperial: Ascenso y caída del sistema político mexicano (1940-1996)*, México: Tusquets editores, 1997.

implemented. Moreover, it is ironic that the main political support for Salinas “modernization” program (at least at an electoral level) came from the most underdeveloped, backward and isolated areas of the country.<sup>61</sup> This apparent paradox suggested that the PRI’s corporate structures were no longer able to have a strong grip on all sectors of society and that, ironically, those classes that historically had benefitted most from the political system had lost faith in it. They were increasingly divided between the more conservative sectors that supported the right wing/catholic Partido Acción Nacional (National Action Party)(PAN), which its electoral base in the more industrious Northern region of the country, or the Center/left PRD with its political bases in Mexico City and some of the poorest states in the Center and South-West of the country.

Therefore, the Salinas regime, its popularity historically low , its party —the PRI— witnessing the collapse of its traditional cross-class power balance, began to put in place a domestic and international political discourse intended to accelerate the process of Mexico’s integration into the North American hegemonic project. This process was ignited by the so called “Houston spirit”: Presidents Bush and Salinas met in Houston, Texas at the very beginning of their mandates to establish an unprecedented relationship for a Mexican and US President. This relationship seemed to prove that the new technocratic elite openly embraced a set of common economic policies that would lead to NAFTA. However, this new ‘honeymoon’ would also provoke profound dislocations and confrontations between the more nationalist factions of the PRI and the State and the new pro-American dominant bloc.

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<sup>61</sup>See Tonatiuh Guillen Lopez, “The Social Bases of the PRI,” in Wayne A. Cornelius, Judith Gentleman and Pether H. Smith (eds), *Mexico’s Alternative Political Futures*, op. cit., fn 57, p. 251.

The international context was radically changing. The Central American crisis was approaching an end, at least in a military sense. After the signing of the Acta de Paz de Esquipulas (Accord of Esquipulas) in August 1987, the process of *détente* accelerated and the military options, although El Salvador was still immersed in a civil war, were losing ground. On the other hand, a year after Salinas and Bush had taken power they witnessed the beginning of the dramatic downfall of the socialist bloc: On November 9, 1989 the Berlin Wall was torn down, the unification of the two post World War II Germanies began and, following a set of other dramatic events in Czechoslovakia, Albania, Bulgaria, Poland, Hungary and Rumania, the Soviet Union saw its demise on December 25, 1991. The Cold War suddenly faded into history. The 'new world order' meant a relaxation of tensions between the two nuclear superpowers. For countries like Mexico, however, which within the Cold War context had a more independent foreign policy, a *rapprochement* with the United States was perhaps the only alternative. Socialism, or any other alternative close to it, would be seen as *passé*. Hence, if there were any traces of socialism in the 'revolutionary nationalist' discourse these had to be erased and declared as archaic and contrary to "modernity". This, in the aftermath of the 1988 elections meant, among other things, a notion and practice of national security directed toward the internal 'enemies' of 'progress'. Beyond the 'war' against illegal drug trafficking, history had apparently buried the last enemies of democracy and free enterprise; where then, could the "enemies" come from within the nation? But then, for the 'misfortune' of those like Salinas himself, trained in American Ivy League universities, the socioeconomic conditions of the country had not changed accordingly. Quite the opposite, the deterioration had not stopped since the 1982 debt crisis.

When Salinas took power, the debt had risen to \$105 billion dollars (representing at least 60% of GDP) and servicing was becoming unbearable (the total payment in accumulated interests was of US \$57 billion representing 35% of GDP or 60% of the total capital exports).<sup>62</sup> One of the first issues on the regime's agenda, therefore, was to renegotiate the debt. The US which also saw such a renegotiation as part of its national interest, put forward the very publicized Brady Plan. The resulting agreement, reached in March 1990, cut Mexico's debt service by \$4 billion dollars a year. Although less than was expected (debt-servicing still represented in 1990 40% of Mexico's total capital exports)<sup>63</sup>, this sum was sufficient to boost private-sector and foreign investor confidence in the economy and bring interest rates down to their lowest level since 1981. Moreover, the renegotiation and rescheduling of the debt added to Salinas' enthusiasm to start negotiations for a North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), ignited an unprecedented flow of capital into the domestic economy. These actions clearly helped push down inflation from 159.2% in 1987 to 7.1% in 1994.<sup>64</sup> It is unquestionable that the temporary victory over inflation and high interest rates helped boost Salinas' popularity both domestically and internationally. However, as we shall see, such 'victories' were only temporary. The macroeconomic indicators were showing a certain level of economic stability that, added to an open pro-

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<sup>62</sup>Data from Georges Couffignal, "Mexique: Les sirènes du nord," in *L'Etat du Monde 1991*, Paris: La Découverte, 1991, p. 175.

<sup>63</sup>Data from Georges Couffignal, "Mexique:L'enracinement au nord," in *L'Etat du Monde 1992*, Paris: La Découverte, 1992, p.167.

<sup>64</sup>Compilation of macroeconomic indicators since 1980 in Manuel Pastor & Carol Wise, "Neoliberal Reform in Mexico," *Journal of Latin American Studies*, Vol. 29, part 2, May 1997, p. 423.

American discourse, helped keep high levels of confidence, particularly on the side of American investors. American investment in Mexico increased from \$ 2. 546 billion dollars in 1982 to \$ 33.157 billion dollars in 1993 (when the highest rates of foreign investment were recorded) with annual averages since 1988 of \$ 11.618 billion dollars.<sup>65</sup> Although these numbers were quite spectacular they were extremely unbalanced: more than 64.2% of such investments were portfolio investments, therefore, extremely volatile.<sup>66</sup> This unbalance in the composition of Mexico's capital flows, added to low growth rates (the average rate from 1988 to 1994 was 2.8)<sup>67</sup>, a climbing deficit in the current account and an overvalued peso, were putting the state in an increasingly vulnerable position that, as we shall see, soon put the financial and economic security of the nation-state once more in jeopardy.

As the struggle for structural change was picking up steam, social and political tensions were becoming more acute. The demands of the PRI's more popular sectors (the CTM and CNC) were being pushed aside by fiscal and monetary policies that, to control inflation and low interest rates, aimed to review salaries and prices through the so called Pacto de Estabilidad y Crecimiento Económico (Stability and Growth Pact) (PECE). The pact was negotiated by the corporate leaders of the PRI representing the official unions and employers, therefore, excluding independent unions. Although the pact did control inflation,

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<sup>65</sup>Ibid. The average estimates are my responsibility.

<sup>66</sup>Ibidem., and John Williamson, "Causes and Consequences of the Mexican Peso Crisis" (Summary of remarks to the Institute for International Economics, March 14, 1995), in World Bank, *Mexican Economic Crisis: EDIMP's Window into Economic Policy Around the World*, Internet edition, <<http://www.worldbank.org/html/edi/edimp/mex/cap.html>>

<sup>67</sup>Manuel Pastor and Carol Wise, *ibid.*, p. 423. The average estimate is my responsibility.

it did not improve the redistribution of wealth which, with a very corrupt privatization process, was polarizing society further. Moreover, the minimum salary had lost, compared to 1976, at least 70% of its purchasing power. On the other hand, government spending regarding education, health, housing, social security and welfare had not reached the levels of 1980.<sup>68</sup> The agricultural sector, however, continued paying the highest social bill for a political economy based on market liberalization, the privatization of most government assets, and the marginalization of the primary sector.

As a result of the unequal regionalization of the economy, the centre and the north, where the historical concentration of the manufacturing sectors were located, reaped most of the benefits from such economic policies. The south, extremely marginalized, continued to plunge into a situation of extreme social and economic polarization. This faced the regime with increasing distributional conflicts that were presenting a serious problem for the advancement of the neoliberal project. Hence, as NAFTA was the capstone of the regime's conceptualization of national security, internal social and political tensions would be the main focus of the regime's national/state security practices.

Mexico's national security was coming to resemble the practices of some of Latin America's military regimes: security would be fundamentally understood as state or regime security, repression and human right violations would be a common practice. And democracy,

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<sup>68</sup>In 1980, the governments social spending as a percentage of GDP for Education was equal to 3.02% for Health 0.40% and for Housing, social security and welfare 2.68% totaling 6.10% of GDP. In 1990 social spending as a percentage of GDP was down to 2.41%; 0.33% and 2.15% respectively, totaling 4.89%. For full chart see Manuel Pastor and Carol Wise, *op. cit.* P. 447. It is important to note that these numbers do not account for inflation plus the decline of the workers Purchasing Power.

at least for the opposition, would be canceled for the sake of the “modernization” of the economy through NAFTA.<sup>69</sup> One of the first things that Salinas did at the outset of his administration was to create a ‘National Security Cabinet’(NSC). This Cabinet, supported by the newly created Centro de Investigación y Seguridad Nacional (Center for Investigations and National Security) (CISEN), was formed by the Secretary of National Defense, the Department of the Navy, the Secretary for the Interior, the Secretary for External Affairs, the Office of the Attorney General and the Secretaries belonging to the “Economic Cabinet”. Its composition showed that the NSC was obviously not just to protect the nation from external attacks but to directly articulate economic policies within a comprehensive framework of national security in which the military and the police would begin to have a say, at least regarding the potential social and political tensions caused by Salinas’ economic ‘revolution’.

Moreover, as the North American integration process was intensifying, Mexico’s national security began to be interpreted in the North American context. Therefore, it was also becoming part of the US agenda of national security, particularly with respect to US concerns about energy security. NAFTA was seen as vital for securing strategic oil resources for the US, even if Salinas were not be able to privatize the extraction and distribution

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<sup>69</sup>Although the Salinas regime had created a National Human Rights Commission (CNDH) which was a response to domestic and international pressures, human right violations did not decline, particularly those related to political tensions. For example, during the first five years of the Salinas’ regime at least 250 PRD members died or vanished under mysterious circumstances, at least 10 percent of prisoners in states like Chiapas were political leaders. See Americas Watch, *Mexico*, Vol. 5, No. 10, October 1993. For the increase of human right violations in Chiapas since the Salinas’ regime see Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights, *Conquest Continued: Disregard for Human and Indigenous Rights in the Mexican State of Chiapas*, October 1992, Minnesota: Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights, 1992.

processes still controlled by PEMEX.

However, because of Salinas' open support for neoliberalism and the US regional economic project, the Bush administration, as well as some Congressmen, were not too concerned about the final outcome of the "energy resource" chapter of NAFTA. For Salinas, national security was to be understood not only by fully embracing neoliberalism but also in the strengthening of the state's links with the US' strategic interests. In this sense, oil, though still controlled by the Mexican state, at least constitutionally, was to be gradually integrated into the North American economic project, promoted and controlled by the US. This can be clearly understood in the following statement from a document elaborated by the US Congress' Committee on International Trade:

For reasons of National Security, Mexico will not include oil in the free trade agreement, however, the Mexican authorities are now studying alternative mechanisms that, without having to modify the Constitution and, keeping in the hands of PEMEX the nominal controls over the hydrocarbon, will permit, by means of joint ventures, leasing contracts, contracts for exploration and the subcontracting of different services, foreign participation in that sector . . . As the attitude of the Salinas de Gortari's government seems more concerned with 'national security' than with an authentic reverence for the Constitution, new reforms will not be considered as a big problem. Some affairs that, in accordance for the Mexican law, are deemed unconstitutional do not represent any problems if we consider that from 1917 to date there has been almost 500 amendments to the Constitution.<sup>70</sup>

If by "an authentic reverence" for the Constitution one meant an irrevocable respect for the higher laws of the nation and the key institutions that make up the nation-state, then, in this context, 'national security' really implied the security of a particular regime and its dominant political and economic projects. In the context of the NAFTA negotiations this also meant that the US was interpreting Salinas' notion and practice of Mexico's 'national

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<sup>70</sup>Quoted in John Saxe Fernández, "libre comercio: el petróleo no, aunque . . .", *Excelsior*, 23 de octubre de 1990, p. 8A. (Translation is mine).



security' as a means to secure American hegemony at a regional level, an objective which, after the fall of the Soviet Union and the reinforcement of the European Union, was also shared by the Salinas cabinet., The US, therefore, accepted constitutional violations by the Salinas government (even if these meant the cancellation of full democracy and the respect for human rights) or Mexico's pursuit of 'authentic' national security concerns such as the protection of its strategic resources.

As we shall see, it was this cynical tampering with the constitution, for 'national security' reasons, that accelerated the braking of the already very weak post-revolutionary consensus. Moreover, for the sake of NAFTA, foreign policies, traditionally pursued for Mexico's national security were left aside (e.g. the free trade agreement would be entirely negotiated by the Secretariat of Commerce and Industrial Development (SECOFI) and the Office of the Presidency without any substantial inputs from the Secretariat of External Affairs or Congress). This posed a problem in the sense that the political dimension of the negotiations was being ignored as too cumbersome for the smooth conclusion of the regime's most important piece of national security policy.

*The paradoxes of "modernization" and their national security impacts: Dismantling Article 27 of the Constitution and reinforcing populism through the Programa Nacional de Solidaridad (National Solidarity Program) (PRONASOL)*

On November 17, 1993, the US House of Representatives ratified the North American Free Trade Agreement. If this represented a victory for the Salinas regime, the tone of the

debates in the US Congress humiliated most Mexicans and accelerated a process that would deepen the polarization of Mexican society and force a radical change in its approach to national security. Despite the fierce political debates in the US Congress, the Mexican middle class was convinced that Salinas had opened the doors for Mexico's insertion into the 'first world'. Politically, the PRI seemed unbeatable. However, structural changes were touching upon some of the more sensitive institutions of post-revolutionary Mexico. Beneath the surface trouble was boiling. The growth rate of the economy was beginning to decline (from 4.4 percent in 1990 to 0.3 percent in 1993) and by the end of the year it was negative.<sup>71</sup> But, what pulled the trigger for social and political unrest in the more depressed rural areas were the radical changes of Article 27 of the Constitution regarding the legal status of land. With most tariffs, food price controls and subsidies for food and agricultural inputs eliminated, and large-scale imports of food and feed with credit and technical assistance being cut and privatized, the seeds for social upheaval were being planted at a very fast and dangerous pace. NAFTA would demand not only a profound capitalization of land but also a privatization of the more 'competitive' crop sectors.

On January 6, 1992, the government announced the end to the land redistribution program. The *ejido*<sup>72</sup>, which was the both the peasant's and indigenous peoples most important gain of the Mexican Revolution as a means not just to redistribute and guarantee

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<sup>71</sup>See Macroeconomic Indicators in Manuel Pastor & Carol Wise, *Neoliberal Reforms in Mexico*, op. cit., p. 423.

<sup>72</sup>The *ejido* is an agricultural cooperative made up of several peasant families who share and work on land that was redistributed during the agrarian reform. Until 1992, Article 27 of the Mexican Constitution prohibited the sale of land under the *ejido* system. Moreover, foreign investment in the agricultural sector was strictly prohibited.

the tenure of the land but also to preserve the traditions and customs that made up their unique identities would literally be 'for sale'. Those who had acquired the right to produce and live on the land could now sell it, rent it and of course enter contracts with private entrepreneurs, including foreign investors. In effect, Mexico's communal holdings, the basis for political and social stability after the Revolution, were being privatized. Although the Constitution would continue protecting the existing *ejidos*, the pressures to sell or rent them were unsustainable for a sector that has had to confront extreme centralization, corruption and pervasive de-capitalization.<sup>73</sup> Although maize and beans continued to receive guaranteed prices, peasants growing other crops confronted a very aggressive market. Moreover, under NAFTA, the situation will become worse as tariffs and import quotas on maize and beans, along with corn subsidies, are being phased out over a period of fifteen years.<sup>74</sup>

With the reforms of Article 27 there has been a very strong perception among peasant and indigenous communities that inequality and land concentration will worsen, their levels of marginalization will increase and their existence as unique communities will be jeopardized. On the other hand, these reforms can aggravate the fragile balance of power between the PRI's rural sectors and its metropolitan elites by triggering violent conflicts.<sup>75</sup> Although it is

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<sup>73</sup>For a critical assessment of the reforms of Art. 27 see: Billie R. DeWalt, Martha N. Rees, and Arthur D. Murphy, *The End of Agrarian Reform in Mexico: Past Lessons, Future Prospects*, San Diego, CA: University of California, Center for US-Mexican Studies, 1994.

<sup>74</sup>For an excellent study on the social effects of eliminating state support for maize or other subsistence crops see: Cynthia Hewitt de Alcántara, "Economic Restructuring and Rural Subsistence in Mexico: Maize and the Crisis of the 1980s," *Discussion Paper 31*, Geneva: UNRISD, 1992.

<sup>75</sup>For a history of rural revolts and their characteristics as a result of neoliberal policies see: Friedrich Katz (ed.), *Riot, Rebellion and Revolution: Rural Social Movements in Mexico*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988. For the increase in violent conflict during the Salinas regime see: Julio Moguel, "Reforma Constitucional y luchas agrarias en el marco de la transición Salinista," in

difficult to measure the total impact of such reforms, it has been estimated that 15 million people could be forced out of the agricultural sector, with no present or future labor alternatives. Moreover, as a consequence of NAFTA at least 800 thousand workers might be displaced by declining corn prices.<sup>76</sup> Donald Schulz (1995) quotes a US Embassy political officer that has estimated that out of the roughly 20 million Mexicans working the land in 1993, only half would be left in the year 2009 with the rest crossing to the US, increasing the numbers of unemployed or, in the best of outcomes, absorbed in the low paying sector of the Maquiladoras.<sup>77</sup> The fact is that, as the former Secretary for Agriculture, Cattle Raising and Rural Development (SAGAR) has stated: "Poverty in rural areas is now a national security problem that cannot accept anymore inefficiencies in the use of its resources. There is clear escalation and expansion of the geography of discontent that can drift into violence and conflict."<sup>78</sup> To prove his point the Secretary of State, who is now the Secretary for the Interior, mentioned the following facts: 1) there are more than 13 million people living in extreme poverty in rural areas (five million more than in 1980); 2) There are now clearly

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Julio Moguel, Carlota Botey and Luis Hernández (eds.), *Autonomía y Nuevos Sujetos Sociales en el Desarrollo Rural, Mexico: Siglo XXI Editores and Centro de Estudios Históricos del Agrarismo en México*, 1992; and Neil Harvey, "Rebellion in Chiapas: Rural Reforms, Campesino Radicalism, and the Limits to Salinismo," in *Transformation of Rural Mexico*, Number 5 (revised and updated), La Jolla, Cal.: Center for US-Mexican Studies, University of California at San Diego, 1994.

<sup>76</sup>Ibid., pp. 1-2. For the figures regarding corn see Alain de Janvry and Elizabeth Sadouet, "NAFTA and Mexico's Corn Producers," paper presented at the 18<sup>th</sup> International Studies Association, March 10-12, 1994, p.3.

<sup>77</sup>Donald E. Schulz, *Mexico in Crisis*, Strategic Studies Institute Special Report, Carlisle Barracks, PA: us Army War College, 1995, p. 11.

<sup>78</sup>*La Jornada*, "La pobreza en el agro, problema de seguridad nacional, afirma Labastida," September 10, 1997, internet version, <<http://serpiente.dgsca.unam.mx/pobreza.html>> (Translation is mine).

identified “hot (violent) spots” in the states of Chiapas, Veracruz, Oaxaca and Guerrero; 3) The agricultural sector has grown at an average rate of 1.2% since 1980 while the population has grown at an average of more than 2%.<sup>79</sup>

Therefore, a “geography of discontent” has been developing that has further polarized the country between an industrialized North and a marginalized and unstable South. Moreover, the dislocation of peasants from the pauperized rural areas increases by the thousands the number of illegal immigrants to the US, which increases border tensions between Mexico and its northern neighbor. Likewise, the worsening condition of peasants, beyond provoking violent tensions, has a strong influence on the production and traffic of illegal drugs.<sup>80</sup>

These factors, not directly caused but intensified by the reforms in Article 27, have urged a reconsideration with respect to some aspects of the traditional notions of national security which assumed, among other factors, a stable rural sector. Lack of sound policies plus political and social inequalities in the rural areas were a major factor for two of Mexico’s most traumatic periods: the war with the US (1846-1848) that stripped the country of half its territories<sup>81</sup> and the Revolution (1910-1920).

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<sup>79</sup>Ibid., pp 1-2. (Translation is mine).

<sup>80</sup>For the US-Mexican security problems related to the social tension in Mexico’s rural areas see: Donald E. Shulz, *Between a Rock and a Hard Place: The United States, Mexico and the Agony of National Security*, US: US Army War College, Strategic Institute Special Report, June 24, 1994. (Particularly pages 1-13).

<sup>81</sup>Although the causes of the Mexican-US War were more complex, there are several theories that have shown that the lack of vision from the central government regarding the need to colonize and invest in the northern states of California, Arizona/New Mexico and Texas were the main cause for losing such territories to the slow but steady advancements of American colonizers who were promoted and protected by the US Federal government. For these theories see: Josefina Zoraida Vazquez, “Los

The Salinas' regime had apparently established a more sophisticated national security system through the CISEN and the National Security Cabinet. However, with the NAFTA negotiations pending on the approval of a very skeptical US Congress, violent social and political tensions, particularly in the poorest regions such as Chiapas, were publicly denied. Instead, the policy chosen to confront such tensions was a very populist and superficial one: With the funds acquired by the privatization of large numbers of state enterprises the regime implemented a program called the National Program for Solidarity (Programa Nacional de Solidaridad or PRONASOL). The social objectives of PRONASOL were twofold: 1) to provide poor communities with a vast array of public services; and 2) to deliver funds and know-how to boost small community business. However, the regional allocation of funds proved that this program was fundamentally a political one designed to cripple the new alliances that had been formed between the PRD and a broad network of social groups representing the rural and urban poor. Moreover, PRONASOL attempted to control, as an 'intelligence' tool, the political and social movements that were being formed in states like Chiapas, and co-opt the opposition by incorporating it into the state's distributive network.<sup>82</sup> Above all, it tried to prop Salinas' political standing, and strengthen the presidency.

NAFTA, the reforms to Article 27 and PRONASOL were essential components of

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primeros tropiezos," in *Historia General de Mexico*, Mexico: El Colegio de Mexico, 1976, particularly pp. 803-818.

<sup>82</sup>For the political nature of PRONASOL see: Denise Dresser, *Neopopulist Solutions to Neoliberal Problems*, San Diego, CA: University of California, Center for US-Mexican Studies, 1991; and "Bringing the Poor Back In: National Solidarity as a Strategy of Regime Legitimation," in Wayne A. Cornelius, Ann L. Craig, and Jonathan Fox, (eds.) *Transforming State-Society Relations in Mexico: The National Solidarity Strategy*, San Diego, CA: University of California, Center for US-Mexican Studies, 1994, pp. 143-166.

a comprehensive notion of national security based on neoliberalism. These economic, political and social policies, labeled as ‘social liberalism’ by Salinas himself,<sup>83</sup> were linked by populist programs designed to ‘manage’ social conflicts likely to emerge from the radical transformation of the economy.

As we shall see, however, in the case of poverty-stricken states like Chiapas, with a large indigenous population that has been historically oppressed, such policies, based on new understandings of national security would clash with a crude reality that would put in jeopardy the technocrats’ dreams of becoming equal partners of the First World. Above all, such policies jeopardized the human security of more than 10 million indigenous peoples whose choice was to integrate into the new political-economic structures or rebel for fear of losing their means of survival and their culture identity.

On November 1993, Salinas announced triumphantly that:

Now our homeland is more respected in the world and is listened to with more attention. . .The country is enjoying greater stability. . .that is, Mexico is stronger. . .Despite difficult moments, there is more hope and more dignity in the country-side. Because of this, Mexico is stronger.

But the greatest change of all, the one that will characterize our current efforts, has taken place in our mentality. It is the change that lies in understanding that we can change without destruction, without intolerance, without exclusions. . .the change that lies in showing that we can compete in the world on equal terms. . .Yes by broadening justice, reaffirming freedoms, and furthering democracy, we are building a stronger Mexico. A stronger and more united Mexico means that over the past five years we have strengthen our nation’s sovereignty. And in doing so, we leave no doubt that we are the generation of change, of forward-looking change, aiming at new horizons, with more promising prospects, with hope, proud of our past and with our eyes fixed in the future.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>83</sup>For its discourse and policy articulation see: Carlos Salinas de Gortari, *Fifth State of the Nation Report, November 1<sup>st</sup>, 1993*, Mexico: Presidencia de la República, 1993.

<sup>84</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 72-73.

As powerful as this triumphant vision of a “stronger Mexico” was trumpeted by the leader of the “generation of change”, in the same speech Salinas unwittingly foreshadowed the fate of his “promising prospects” when he concluded that: “There will always be battles for social justice in our nation, as long as the memory and example of Emiliano Zapata remain alive in the hearts of Mexicans.”<sup>85</sup>

Two months later, those words came back to haunt Salinas and his followers. On January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1994, when the new year was breaking, with the “generation of change” celebrating with champagne, the memories of Zapata were coming alive in the hearts of those silenced and forgotten for the sake of a “stronger Mexico”: The Zapatista National Liberation Army or Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (EZLN) appeared in the state of Chiapas and took by arms several of the state’s municipal districts. The federal army, stationed in the state for national security reasons, was sleeping, for it was no longer in demand, Salinas’ ‘modernized’ security and intelligence institutions were celebrating their ‘new mentality’ and ‘greater presence in the world’ for the country was ‘enjoying greater stability’. “Social liberalism” would make a stronger bourgeoisie with 13 more billionaires<sup>86</sup> centered around a more modern and competitive industrial sector, but the nation, with more than 40 million of its citizens living in poverty —10 million indigenous peoples in extreme— was not, beyond rhetoric, “stronger” or more “sovereign”.

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<sup>85</sup>Ibid., p. 74.

<sup>86</sup>For the classification of Mexico’s new billionaires that were ‘born’ during the Salinas’ regime see: “Meet the World’s Newest Billionaires”, “You can’t any longer see Mexico as a Third World,” *Forbes*, July 5, 1993, p. 76.



*The end of the Salinas regime, the persistence of violent social conflict and the acceleration of the Neoliberal downfall*

The man, considered by *Time Magazine* in 1993 “Man of the Year”<sup>87</sup>, saw his dreams of *grandeur* vanish in a year that would shake the whole political system to its seams. After January 1, 1994, when NAFTA came into force and inserted Mexico into the First World, the vaunted national stability was sucked into a whirlpool of social, political and economic crisis that made a mockery not only of Salinas’ embellished image but also of the ‘modernization’ process. The country witnessed a decline in growth, a social and economic polarization unseen since the Mexican Revolution and a political system fracturing to the point of conspiracy and murder.

On March 23, 1994, the PRI’s presidential candidate, Luis Donaldo Colosio was assassinated apparently by a lone gunman. The system was in a state of shock and its economic bases were beginning to crumble as uncertainty and a lack of confidence invaded the minds of foreign investors. To further the political chaos, on September 1994, the PRI Secretary General suffered the same fate as Colosio and in December of the same year, the EZLN launched its “second offensive”. The political instability, plus an unsustainable current account deficit in the order of \$ 30 billion US and the decline of international reserves from \$ 29 billion US in February, 1994 to \$ 5 billion US at the end of the year<sup>88</sup> were the

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<sup>87</sup>See section “Man of the Year”, “The World’s Other Newsmaker,” *Time*, January 4, 1993.

<sup>88</sup>For an excellent analysis of the 1994 economic crisis and data see: David M. Gould, “Mexico’s Crisis: Looking Back to Assess the Future,” and Sidney Weintraub, “Mexico’s Foreign Economic Policy: From Admiration to Disappointment,” in Laura Randall (ed.), *Changing Structure*

backstage for the federal elections and a new economic crisis that told Mexicans that the dream of becoming a First World country was over.

*Ernesto Zedillo: A new president, the same political economy and the nation's security at stake*

On December 1<sup>st</sup>, 1994 Zedillo took office with a low profile but secure victory: although he had not been the original PRI's candidate, he had won the federal elections in what seem to have been the cleanest elections ever in Mexican history. In his inaugural address he distanced himself from his predecessor by stressing the need to focus on the political aspects of a policy that, since De la Madrid's regime had mainly focused on the economic aspects of development. The time was apparently ripe to do so, for as Zedillo stated:

“Today, before us, an unprecedented opportunity to achieve the economic growth that the population demands is present. Added to the domestic market in expansion, we now count with enormous markets of which we have access thanks to the trade negotiations celebrated with other countries. . . We will construct and modernize highways and ports, telecommunications and the infrastructure for the rural areas . . .”<sup>89</sup>

The conditions to construct a more modern Mexico were apparently finally put in place, therefore, the commitment with those in society that had been ignored by the “modernization” process would be, at least rhetorically, an imperative for Zedillo:

Our most important commitment shall be with those who have less. Now that we can construct a more prosperous Mexico we should and can have a more just Mexico. Despite the

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*of Mexico: Political, Social, and Economic Prospects*, NY/London: M.E. Sharpe, 1996, figures 3.7 and 4.4. in pp. 33 and 49 respectively.

<sup>89</sup>See Ernesto Zedillo, *Mensaje de Toma de Posesión, 1o de Diciembre de 1994*, Mexico: Presidencia de la República, p. 2. (Translation is mine).

efforts, poverty still persists in all the national territory and is intensifying in regions and groups that confront great barriers to overcome it. During years, the Mexican rural area have been subject to severe crisis. . .the indigenous communities suffer from tremendous deprivations, injustice and lack of opportunities that have made of poverty history and destiny. This is unacceptable. . .The time has come in which democracy embraces all the ambits of social relations.<sup>90</sup>

On the other hand, he announced an ongoing combat against state corruption, stating that: “The government is not the place to amass fortunes; who aspires to do so shall do it out of my government and under the rule of law.”<sup>91</sup> The reforms were to be strictly focused on a profound restructuring of the state which, particularly during the Salinas years, had seen an increase in corruption due to a very dubious privatization process and to the penetration of the drug cartels at very high levels of the state.<sup>92</sup>

Regardless of the good intentions of a president who seemed more sensitive to the people’s needs, macroeconomic “stability” as a product of a more ‘prosperous Mexico’ was an illusion that would dramatically fade away and sink the dreams of those who thought the “unprecedented opportunity” would be finally reached. Twenty days later the peso collapsed and international reserves dwindled to their lowest levels since 1988. What was supposed to be a correction of an overvalued peso went out of control and provoked a devaluation of at least 50% vis a vis the US dollar. The economic and social effects of this devaluation, that was badly needed but postponed by the Salinas regime for fear of the PRI losing the

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<sup>90</sup>Ibid., pp. 3,4 and 6. (Translation is mine).

<sup>91</sup>Ibid.,p. 8.(Translation is mine).

<sup>92</sup>For the penetration of the drug cartels in the Mexican state and it impact on national security see: Donald Schulz, *Between a Rock and a Hard Place: The United States, Mexico, and the Agony of National Security*, op. cit., fn 77.

elections, were enormous: at least 30,000 small and medium size businesses went bankrupt, 1.8 million jobs were lost and the banking system was at a verge of total collapse as a result of the liquidity crisis.<sup>93</sup> The “modernization” of the nation’s infrastructure and the “compromise with those with less” would not only have to wait but would have to “swallow” once more the ‘sour medicine’ of the IMF.

To a certain extent, President Zedillo was right when he mentioned the “opportunities that were present” as a result of the trade negotiations: The Clinton administration had to come to the rescue of its NAFTA partner. On the other hand, the IMF would respond with one of the largest bail outs ever. The US, through the Executive, provided a credit line of \$20 billion US from the Exchange Stabilization Fund and the International Monetary Fund granted Mexico an eighteen month standby credit of \$17.8 billion, plus \$10 billion in short term support from the central banks of the Group of Ten Countries channeled through the Bank of International Settlements.<sup>94</sup> The swift reactions from Washington and the IMF clearly showed that the peso crisis and its ‘tequila effect’ were a security problem not only for Mexico but also for the US and some Latin American states. But, the main problem was to accept that something was going wrong with their *bon élève*. Mexico was supposed to be

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<sup>93</sup>See World Bank, *Mexican Economic Crisis*, Internet version, March 1995, <<http://www.worldbank.org/html/edi/edimp/mex/stv.html>> and World Bank, *Causes and Consequences of the Mexican Peso Crisis*, Internet version, March, 1995, <<http://www.worldbank.org/html/edi/edimp/mex/william/html>>. For the social and national security impacts see Donald Schulz, *Between a Rock and a Hard Place: The United States, Mexico, and the Agony of National Security*, op. cit., fn 77.

<sup>94</sup>For details of the “rescue package” see International Monetary Fund, “IMF Approves US\$17.8 Billion Stand-by Credit for Mexico,” *IMF Press Release No. 95/10*, Washington DC., IMF. February 1, 1995.

the example for the rest of Latin America that was expecting a continental free trade accord trumpeted in the 1994 Miami Summit.

Mexico repaid the US “rescue package” (by acquiring more debt in the European market and diverting its revenues from oil exports to the US Federal Reserve), but its external debt grew to US\$157 billion 548 dollars, representing 47% of GDP.<sup>95</sup> The new Secretary of Finance announced a rescue program that would continue depriving “those with less”. The plan had three components:

1. A so-called National Accord among the leaders of the PRI corporate structures, business and government to assure wage and price controls. In addition, the state would reduce government spending by 1.3% of GDP and cut sharply the amount of credit granted by the state to development banks. And, the Value Added Tax plus those applied to gas and other essential goods would raise from 10% to 15%.
2. Continuation of market-oriented reforms by accelerating the constitutional amendments to allow foreign private investment in railroads, telecommunications, the banking system and the petrochemical sector.
3. The reinforcement of monetary policies to contain inflation plus a floating peso.<sup>96</sup>

These measures not only were very unpopular but also deepened the erosion of the nation-state’s sovereignty: The application of the restructuring programs, with their extremely

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<sup>95</sup>Latest debt data taken from newspaper *Excelsior*, “La SHCP informa que la deuda exterior llegó a los 157 mil 548 millones de dólares,” February 13, 1998, p. 3A.

<sup>96</sup>For a résumé of the ‘rescue program’ see World Bank, *Mexican Economic Rescue Program*, Internet version, January 1995 <<http://www.worldbank.org/html/edi/edimp/mex/rescue.html>> For more details see: Presidencia de la República: *Acuerdo de Unidad para Superar la Emergencia Económica*, Mexico: Presidencia de la República, 3 de enero de 1995.

negative social impacts, would be strictly observed by the IMF and the US Treasury. Moreover, the regime's notion of National Security, with the Chiapas upheaval not resolved and the drug cartels in control not only of their 'territories' but of key sectors of the state, became integrated into the US agenda of 'intercontinental security'<sup>97</sup>. Regarding the infiltration and control of the drug cartels in the Mexican national security system, it is important to mention the arrest and imprisonment of the head of the since dismantled National Institute for the Control of Drugs, General Jesús Gutiérrez who, while praised by the US was on the payroll of the Juárez Cartel.<sup>98</sup> Likewise, the arrest and imprisonment of Raúl Salinas, brother of the former president on charges related to the murder of the PRI Secretary General and possible money laundering,<sup>99</sup> not only shook the political system but undermined the national security system that was becoming dangerously dysfunctional.

The conjunction of the overwhelming power of the drug cartels, with the Chiapas

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<sup>97</sup>For Mexico's role in the notion of an intercontinental security articulated with NAFTA see: Maria Cristina Rosas Gonzalez, "Seguridad nacional y aspectos estrategico-militares inmersos en el Acuerdo de Libre Comercio entre Mexico, Estados y Canadá," *Relaciones Internacionales*, vol. XIII, no. 52, septiembre/diciembre, 1991, UNAM, pp. 88-95; Luis Gonzalez Souza, "Crisis de seguridad," *La Jornada*, 27 de septiembre de 1997, <<http://serpiente.dgsca.unam.mx/jornada/souza.html>>; Eduardo Vazquez Martin, "Amenazas y anticuerpos nacionales," (interview with Sergio Aguayo), *La Jornada Semanal*, 21 de septiembre de 1997, <<http://seerpiente.dgsca.unam.mx/jornada/1997/sep97/970921/sem-eduardo.html>>; Luis Herrera-Lasso, "Recent Developments in the Concept of Hemispheric Security," in H.P. Klepak, *Natural Allies? (ed.), Canadian and Mexican Perspectives on International Security*, Ottawa: Carleton University Press and the Canadian Foundation for the Americas, 1996; Donald Shulz, *Between a Rock and a Hard Place: The United States, Mexico, and the Agony of National Security*, op. cit.

<sup>98</sup>For the news in English see: Julia Preston, "A general in Mexico's Drug War is Dismissed on Narcotics Charges," *New York Times*, February 19, 1997; Preston, "Mexico's Jailed Anti-Drug Chief had Completed Briefings in the US," *Ibid.* February 20, 1997.

<sup>99</sup>For an excellent account of the high levels of corruption in the Salinas' administration and his brother's arrest see: Andrés Oppenheimer, *Bordering on Chaos*, US: Little Brown, 1996.

upheaval and the high rates of crime resulting from the dramatic socio-economic impact of both the neoliberal policies and the peso crisis, had a twofold effect on Mexico's national security notions and practices: 1) It expanded the concept and practice of national security by including in it aspects of public security, and hence, pushing the military to take up police roles which have exposed it to higher levels of corruption and human right violations and, a deterioration of its image and legitimacy<sup>100</sup>, and 2) it increased US intervention in Mexico's military affairs.

As to the latter, the increased US presence has not lacked strong criticism on both sides of the border, although the more strident outcries of disapproval have come from the Mexican side, which has a historic sense of insecurity vis a vis the US. However, because neoliberal economics at a regional level has become the kernel of the technocratic regime's understanding of national security, such an increase is seen by the dominant bloc as an integral part of the country's integration with the First World (as new members of the OECD) and with the US (as 'equal' partners). The deepening of US-Mexican relations has seen an unprecedented transfers of military aircraft, training of Mexican soldiers in counter-narcotics tactics and a package of military aid of around US\$ 37 million dollars.<sup>101</sup> Although the

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<sup>100</sup>The Mexican Army has not only been used to combat illegal drug trafficking but also other more common crimes. The Zedillo regime decided in 1996/97 to expand its role by appointing military officers as heads of Mexico's Secretariat for Public Security, the Federal District's Judicial Police and other federal agencies across the nation. For the dramatic change in Mexico's military role regarding public security see: Andrés Oppenheimer, "Generals Expand Role in Mexico," *Miami Herald*, February 15, 1997; Julia Preston, "Mexico's Army Out of the Barracks," *New York Times*, September 14, 1996; Donald Schulz, *Between a Rock and a Hard Place: The United States, Mexico, and the Agony of National Security*, op. cit.

<sup>101</sup>For details on Mexico's impressive military build-up and new military relationship with the US during the Salinas and Zedillo years see: past Donald Schulz, *Between a Rock and a Hard Place*, op. cit., pp. 17-24.

training programs, military equipment transfers and monetary aid have been conditional to their exclusive use for combating the drug cartels, it is no coincidence that such training programs have been carried out in Fort Bragg and the School of the Americas, which have been the main training institutions for most Latin American generals involved in Low Intensity Warfare.<sup>102</sup>

Although it was never openly publicized, there was, particularly during the Cold War, a close relationship between the Mexican and US military. With the integration of Mexico's economic structures with those of the US and Canada, there has been an increase in pressures, particularly from Washington, not just to close the circuit of this relationship—or as Carlos Fazio (1997) bluntly states, “to close the circuit of regional dependency”—but to have a major say in Mexico's national security issues proportionate to the scale of the US's foreign direct investment. Moreover, the increase of Mexico's drug cartels' role as the major exporters of cocaine to the US, added to Mexico's political and social instability—the product, among other things, of a political economy that fundamentally excludes a large number of its citizens—has pushed the army to suppress, in the name of national security, an opposition which is very nationalist and has never challenged the state or its territorial integrity.

It is undeniable that, even after a set of political and electoral reforms which have had

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<sup>102</sup>Regarding the training programs and the increase in the numbers of Mexican military officers training in such institutions see: Gilberto López Rivas, “La injerencia extranjera en Chiapas,” in *La Jornada*, Internet version, March 12, 1998, <<http://serpiente.dgsca.unam.mx/jornada/rivas.html>> Also see: Carlos Fazio, *El tercer vínculo: De la teoría del caos a la teoría de la militarización* (prólogo de Lorenzo Meyer), Mexico: Joaquín Mortiz, 1996.



a positive effect on Mexico's democratization process, the present regime has been more exclusionary and authoritarian. Moreover, acute class and ethnic struggles have always been present, despite the fact they have been concealed by both the 'revolutionary nationalist' and the 'social liberal' or 'modernity' discourses.<sup>103</sup> It is also true that beyond NAFTA, the Salinas regime established a set of less spectacular but also far-reaching free trade agreements with Chile, Colombia and Venezuela. For its part, the Zedillo regime has been negotiating a free trade agreement with the European Union. Nevertheless, a very active economic foreign policy, which responds to an understanding of national security based on an 'open' and more 'competitive' economy, is actually, as we will attempt to demonstrate with the case of Chiapas and the 1994 Zapatista upheaval, a policy based on a transnational hegemonic project that does not respond to the historical necessities of most Mexicans, especially its 10 million indigenous peoples. As the regime's legitimacy is questioned and the conditions of class and ethnic struggles are drifting to violent conflict, the conceptualization and practice of Mexico's actual national security is one in which there is a clear fracture between a dominant 'historic bloc' that has embraced a political and economic discourse that is proving dangerously dysfunctional for the both the human security of at least half of Mexico's marginalized population and the nation-state itself. As a result of such social and political fractures, Mexico, as Sergio Aguayo & Bruce Bagley's title suggests is "In search of the lost

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<sup>103</sup>For an excellent study on the historical distortions of Mexico's ethnic problems created but the 'revolutionary nationalist' discourse and practice see: Roger Bartra, *Agrarian Structure and Political Power in Mexico* (translated by Stephen K. Ault), Baltimore/London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993. For an outstanding and very recent historical perspective on the class/ethnic struggles in the making of modern Mexico see Enrique Florescano, *Etnia, Estado y Nación. Ensayo sobre las identidades colectivas en México*, Mexico: Editorial Aguilar, 1998.

security”.<sup>104</sup> However, this “search” may not be conducted in the neoliberal discourse of ‘modernity’ and ‘competitiveness’, but through a profound understanding of the needs and fears of Mexico’s excluded.

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<sup>104</sup>Sergio Aguayo & Bruce Bagley (eds.), *En busca de la seguridad perdida: Aproximaciones a la seguridad nacional mexicana*, op. cit., fn 49.

## Chapter V

### Chiapas: A Land of Wealth, Marginalization and Social Struggle

#### *Introduction*

This chapter focuses on the political, economic and social geography of Chiapas. It aims to present a national, regional and an international dimension to the Chiapas rebellion. Using the conceptual framework below, this chapter identifies the political, socioeconomic and environmental factors that have led to the upheaval. (See Figure 1.V.). This framework contextualizes the Chiapas rebellion within the larger framework presented in Chapter 1.

Chiapas' human misery was historically ignored until January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1994, when a large sector of the state's peasant and indigenous peoples, under the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN) rose in arms. The armed movement took its name from the revolutionary Emiliano Zapata (1879-1919) who organized the Southern Army of the Mexican Revolution in 1910 from the state of Morelos.<sup>1</sup> Although in military terms the

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<sup>1</sup>Although there was no unified revolutionary army during the Revolution, and Zapata actually broke with the Maderistas who were not really interested in land reform, he was able to push for the abolition of large private landholdings called *latifundia*, which were created at the expense of communal land. His ideas on land reform were expressed in the Plan de Ayala (Nov. 25, 1911), and were later used for the establishment of Article 27 of the Mexican Constitution which, until 1992, guaranteed the full redistribution of communal lands to peasants and indigenous communities as well as the unconditional protection of collective farmland called the *ejido*. Compared to other regions, however, land redistribution in Chiapas has always lagged behind, and indigenous peoples have been bluntly ignored. For an excellent account on Zapata and his movement see the now classic work of John Womack, *Zapata and the Mexican Revolution*, NY: Random House, 1968.

EZLN has not presented a real challenge for the Federal Army, the upheaval has nevertheless ignited a national and worldwide reaction regarding the disastrous human consequences of an economic project that has always considered indigenous peoples as expendable. Perhaps the most important impact of this small but effective armed movement, with the worldwide expansion of the technological revolution, is that these contradictions which have been concealed for almost 500 years, are now witnessed and shared worldwide, not only by those who control such instruments but also by those who suffer from them.<sup>2</sup> However, as we will see in the next chapter, despite the global awareness that the upheaval has sparked, the indigenous peoples of Chiapas are still, and apparently still wish to remain, part of the Mexican state. Their desire, in an increasingly interdependent world order, to still consider the nation-state as the fundamental pillar for the survival of a diverse number of communities, urges us to contextualize Chiapas' social and political problems within Mexico's overall national security challenges.

While human exploitation and misery have been an endemic problem for most

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<sup>2</sup>Beyond the fact that Mexico has been at the forefront of world politics since signing the NAFTA and becoming a member of such organizations as the OECD or APEC, as well as suffering from financial crises with a worldwide impact such as the '1994 peso crisis' and its 'tequila effect', it is interesting to note how the EZLN has established a worldwide internet network that has given the movement, and the causes for its struggle, a very strong international exposure and support. From our own accounts, there are more than one hundred internet homepages related to the EZLN that are located in every continent and in more than 50 nation-states. For a good example of the size of such network see the internet homepage called Chiapas95, which compiles a large number of these sites from around the world. Their address is <<http://www.eco.utexas.edu:80/homepages/faculty/Cleaver/Chiapas95.html>>

of Latin America, neoliberal regimes such as De la Madrid's (1982-1988) and Salinas' (1988-1994), attempted to swiftly jump Mexico to 'modernity' by following the dictates of a hegemonic project that, at a regional level, has been fundamentally promoted and instrumented by the United States' dominant economic elites and their Mexican counterparts.

It is important to understand that, in the process of *capturing*<sup>3</sup> the state's resources by domestic and foreign economic elites as well as the state's political elites, Chiapas has been embroiled in a set of violent conflicts between those who see the region as a never-ending resource base for exploitation and those who see it as their motherland that needs to be defended and protected. Moreover, the structural causes of such struggle should be understood within a broader context in which social and political violence in Chiapas is seen as an expression of antagonistic positions regarding a particular national project and its articulation as deeply rooted in local values and traditions.

Although the social and political struggles which have been directed in securing the political and legal boundaries of a nation-state have marginalized the indigenous and peasant populations of Chiapas in many ways, these have also offered

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<sup>3</sup>The idea of 'capturing' the scarce and key resources and its national and human security impacts was developed by Thomas Homer-Dixon in "Environmental Scarcities and Violent Conflict: Evidence from Cases," *International Security*, 19, No. 1. It has been applied to the case of Chiapas in Philip Howard and Thomas Homer-Dixon, *Environmental Scarcity and Violent Conflict: The Case of Chiapas, Mexico*, Toronto/Washington, DC: University of Toronto & American Association for the Advancement on Science, 1995.

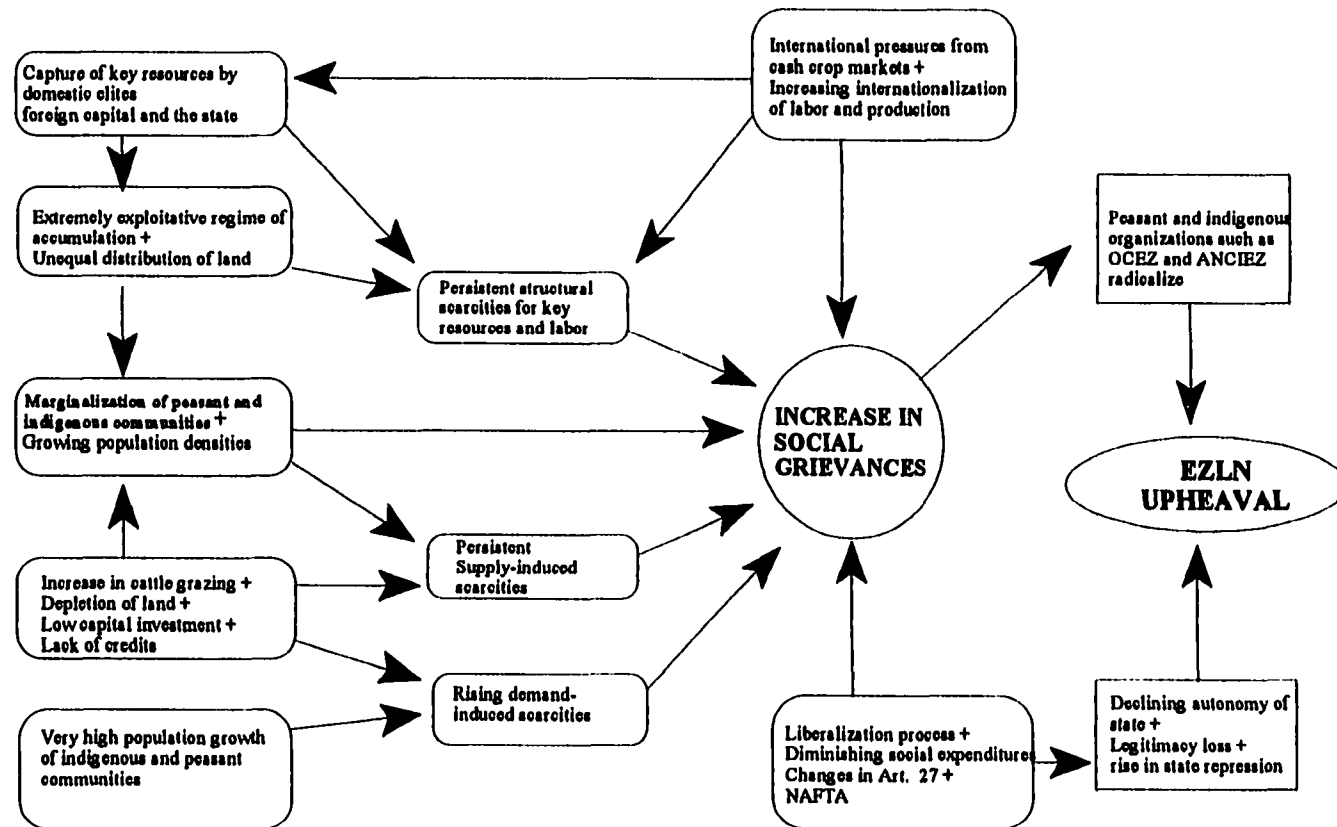
them, particularly after the Mexican Revolution, a political and legal frame that sheltered them from the overwhelming power of a regional and global hegemonic project for a long time. This project is now about to completely expel them from their land and destroy their community identities, and jeopardize their survival as unique peoples. For Mexico's 10 million indigenous peoples, it is only by respecting the integrity of their sui generis social, political and cultural expressions that Mexico can survive as a truly independent nation-state.<sup>4</sup> And, as we will further see, it is this notion of a multinational state that, after the 1994 'Zapatista' upheaval, has come back to the forefront of the nation's debate regarding its national security and political future within a new set of international and regional political and economic arrangements.

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<sup>4</sup>Although the National Institute of Geography, Statistics and Computing (INEGI) state that Mexico has approximately 6.5 million indigenous peoples, the National Indigenist Institute (INI) and the United Nations give the number as 10 million. The difference lies in the variables used to determine whether or not a community is indigenous. For the INEGI, indigenous peoples are those who speak a native language as their first language. For the INI and the UN, indigenous peoples are defined not only by language, but also by socio-political institutions and specific customs and traditions. For INEGI figures, see INEGI, *Resultados definitivos del Censo de Población y Vivienda 1995 de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos*, México, 1995, internet address, <[http://www.inegi.gob.mx/homepara/centeo/bol\\_rep.html](http://www.inegi.gob.mx/homepara/centeo/bol_rep.html)>. For the UN and INI numbers as well as their variables see article in *Excelsior*, "Existen en México 10 millones de indígenas: 97% residen en regiones marginadas: INI-ONU," February, 15, 1998, internet version, <<http://www.Excelsior.com.mx/nac16/INO-ONU.html>>

Figure 1.V.

**Political, socioeconomic factors and environmental scarcities and their links to the 1994 Zapatista Upheaval**

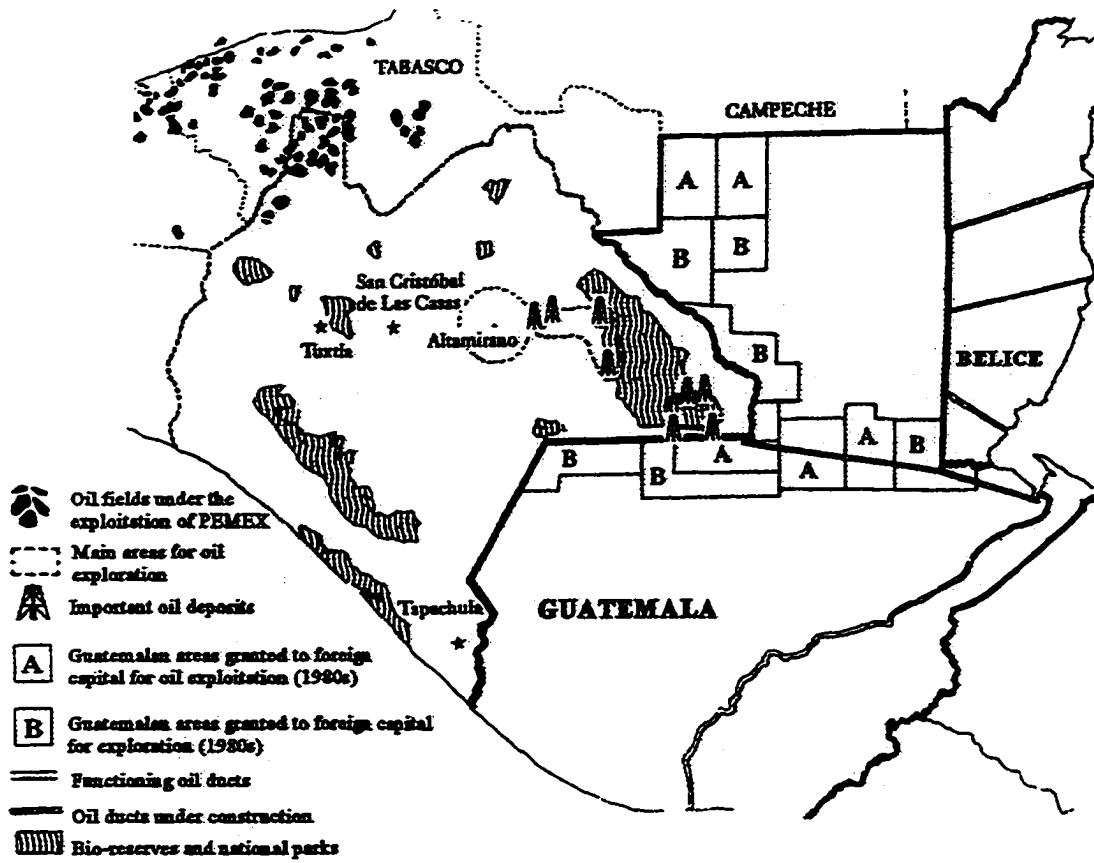


*Chiapas: A land of paradoxes*

Chiapas is the southernmost state of Mexico. It has an area of 75,000 square kilometres (equivalent to roughly 7.5 million hectares). Considered one of the most important bio-reserves in the world, it has oil and gas deposits, an unmatched hydroelectric potential, and is a producer of cash crops for export. It also has large landholdings devoted to grazing for cattle. Some of these resources, which are key to Mexico's national security, are shared with Guatemala, with which Chiapas has a 962-kilometre common border (see map 1.V.).



**Map 1.V. Strategic Resources**



Source: Ana Esther Ceceña and Andrés Barreda, "Chiapas y sus recursos estratégicos," in Neus Espresate (ed), *Chiapas 1*, Mexico: Editorial Era & Instituto de Investigaciones Económicas, UNAM, 1997, p. 57.

Chiapas is divided into three main geographical areas that encompass nine economic areas and 111 municipalities or *municipios*. (See Maps 2.V. and 3.V.). These are:

(1) the *Socomsco-Istmo Coast*, located in the Pacific Coast lowlands. This area has large plantations of cash crops for export such as coffee, bananas and sugar. It also has port facilities which have attracted investment in light industries. The Soconusco has served as the main engine for capital accumulation since the 1890s, when Germans settled in the area and began producing most of the region's coffee for export to Europe.

(2) the *Central Highlands*, which have an elevation of 900 meters from the coast to the fertile lands of the Grijalva River and its tributaries. In this area is located the two urban centers that have been at the core of Chiapas' history: San Cristóbal de las Casas, the former capital of the state, and Tuxtla Gutiérrez, the present state capital. It is in the Central Highlands where most of the communal agriculture is practiced. North of this region are important oil and natural gas deposits that are shared with the neighbouring state of Tabasco. It is also in this region where three of the country's largest hydroelectric dams produce 55 percent of Mexico's hydroelectric power.<sup>5</sup> The Central Highlands also contains large tracts of lands for cattle grazing which, because of a lack of capital investment, have depleted most of the arable land and pushed the peasant and indigenous populations to more inhospitable lands.

(3) the *Eastern Lowlands*, which include the Lacandón Rain Forest, bounded by the Usumacinta River and Guatemala to the east. It has a vast deforested area called the Marqués de Comillas in the South and one of the largest bio-reserves in the world, the Montes Azules.<sup>6</sup> This area has seen an unprecedented increase in its population in the Cañadas at the foot of the Highlands. The center of this area has been literally invaded by cattle ranchers who have been politically supported by the PRI, as cattle grazing has become one of the fastest-growing and most lucrative industries in the state.<sup>7</sup> This makes Chiapas an extremely attractive region for the future exploitation

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<sup>5</sup> See Ana Esther Ceceña & Andrés Barrreda, *Chiapas y sus recursos estratégicos*, op. cit., pp. 68-69.

<sup>6</sup> It is estimated that in one hectare of the Lacandon Rain Forest, there are 30 species of trees, 40 of birds, 20 of mammals, 300 of butterflies and approximately 5,000 of other invertebrate species. Chiapas actually contains 12 percent of all the biota of the world. See Victor Manuel Tinoco Toledo, "La diversidad Biológica en México: Nuevos retos para la investigación en los noventa," *Ciencias* No. 34, Facultad de Ciencias, UNAM, México, abril-junio de 1994, p. 50. See also, Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía e informática, *Estadísticas del medio ambiente*, edición 1994, pp. 65-75.

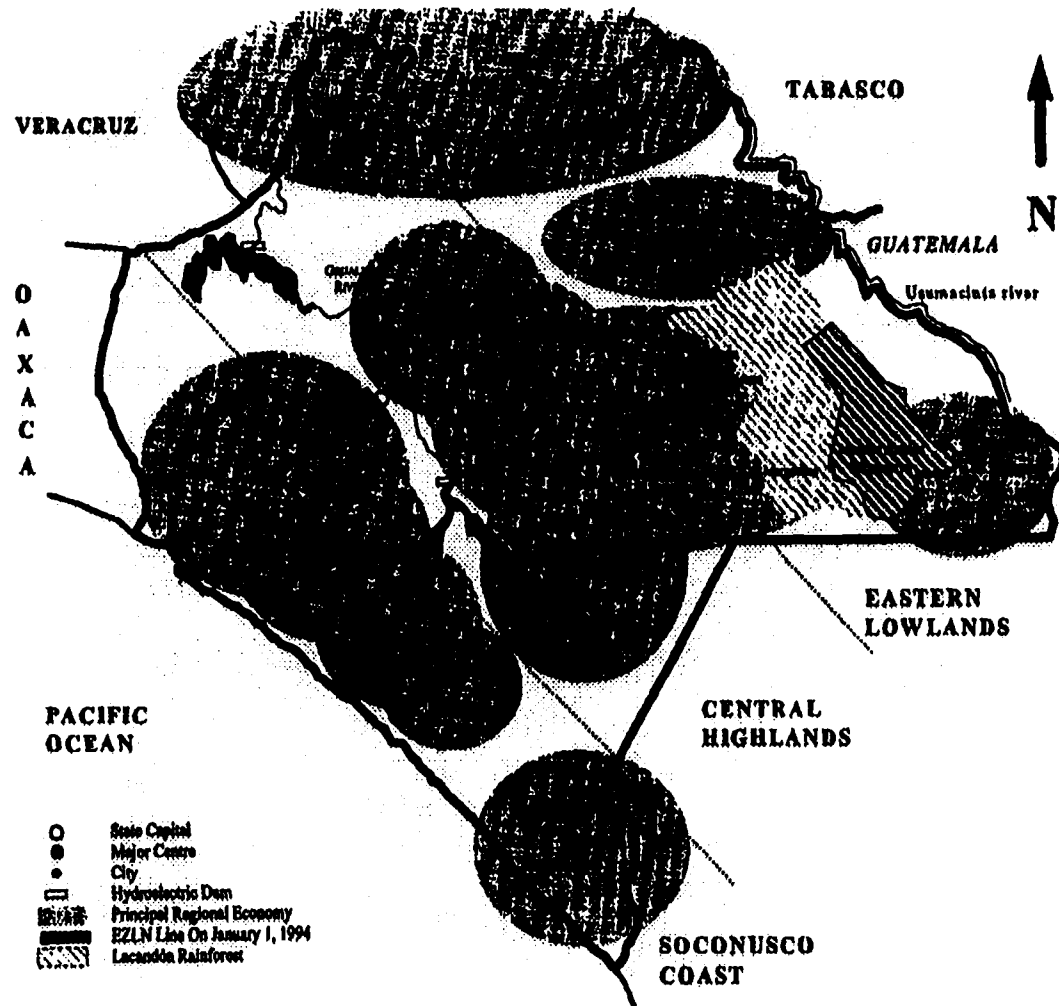
<sup>7</sup> Cattle grazing has grown from approximately 500 head of cattle in 1920 to 3.5 million in 1994! See chart in Philip Howard and Thomas Homer-Dixon, *Environmental Scarcity and Violent*

of the bio-diversity's potential for bio-genetic research and development. It is between this area and the Central Highlands where the Zapatista rebellion began.

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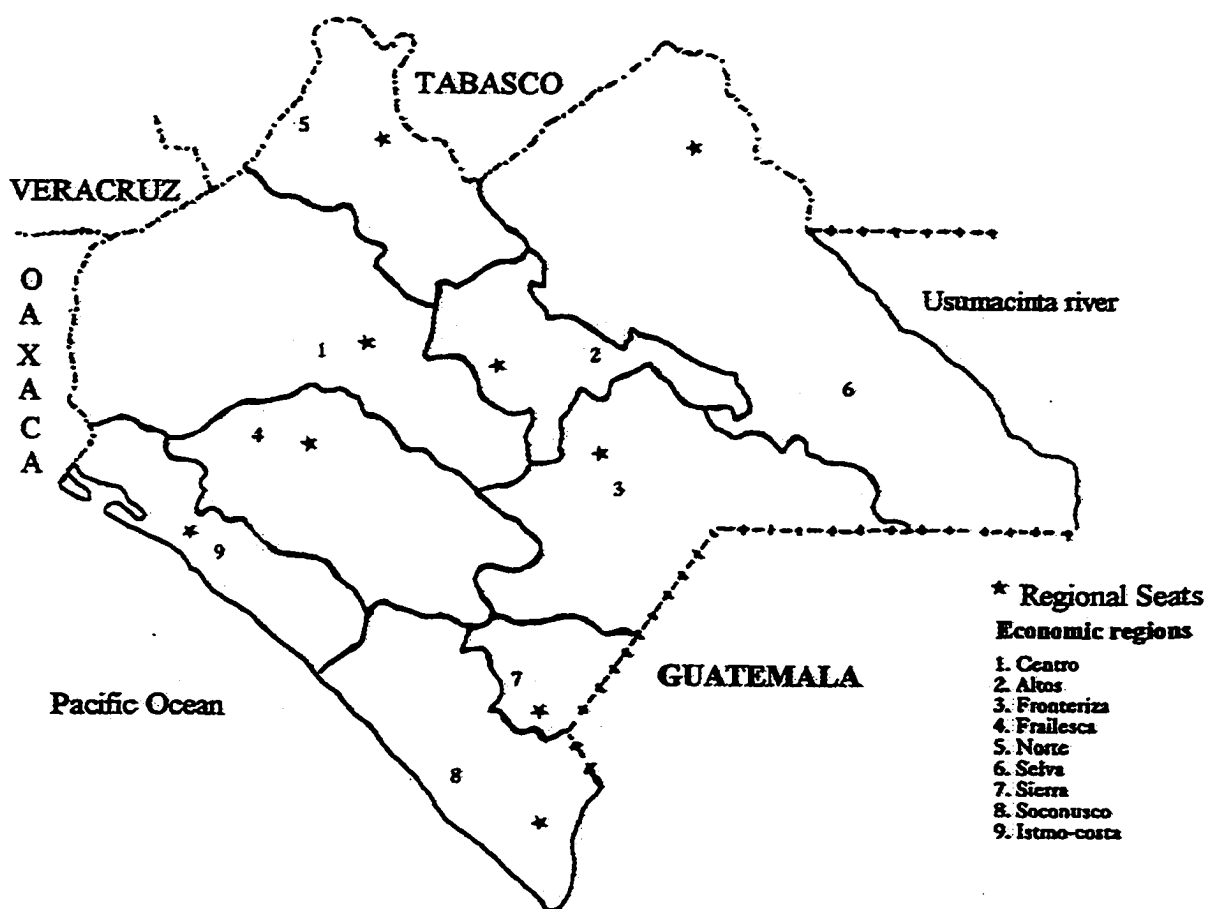
*Conflict: The Case of Chiapas, Mexico*, Washington D.C./Toronto: American Association for the Advancement of Science & University College of Toronto, 1995, p. 14. See also, Thomas Benjamin, *A Rich Land, A Poor People*, op. cit., p. 233.

**Map 2.V. Geography and Political Economy of Chiapas, Mexico**



Source: Philip Howard and Thomas Homer-Dixon, *Environmental Scarcity and Violent Conflict: The Case of Chiapas, Mexico*, Toronto/Washington, DC: University of Toronto & American Association for the Advancement of Science, 1995.

**Map 3.V. ECONOMIC REGIONS**



Source: Ana Esther Ceceña and Andrés Barreda, "Chiapas y sus recursos estratégicos," in Neus Espresate (ed.), *Chiapas I*, Mexico: Editorial Era & Instituto de Investigaciones Económicas, UNAM, 1997, p.60.

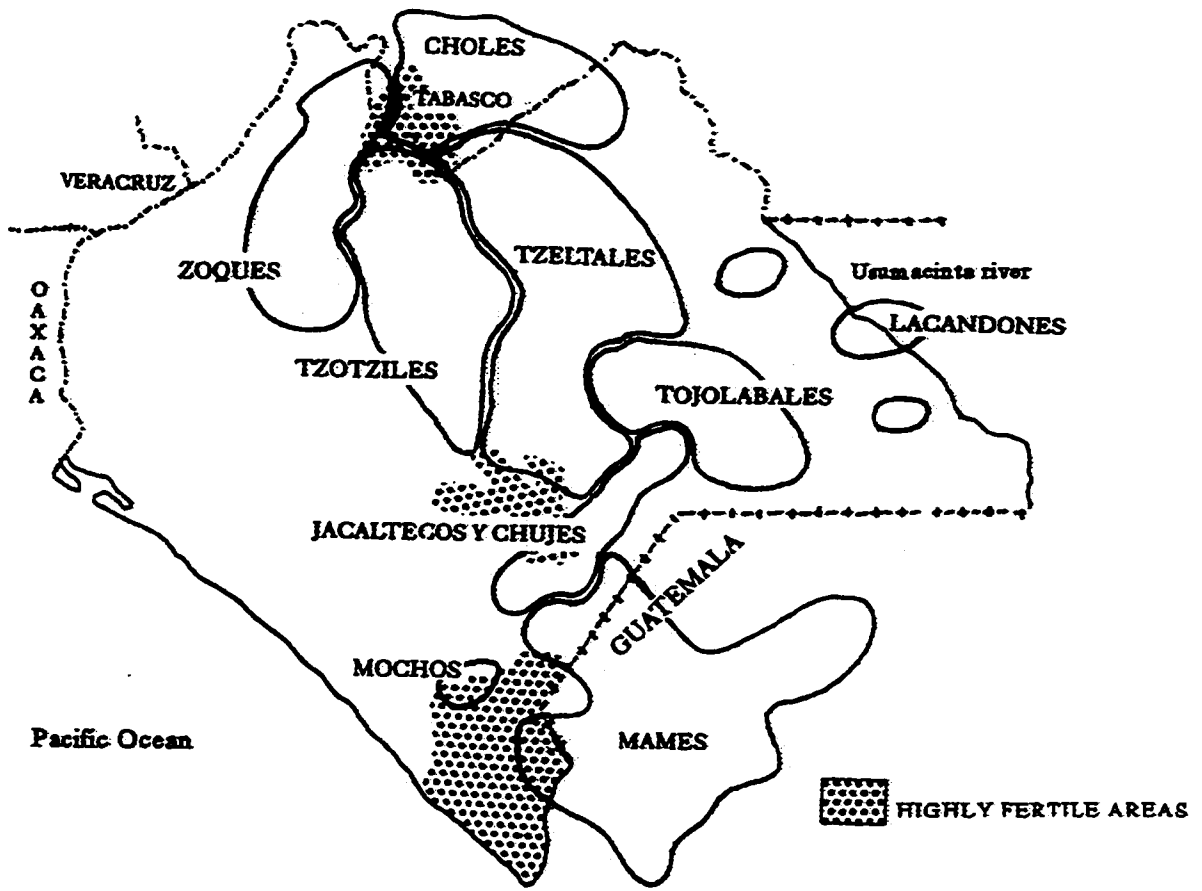
Chiapas has a population of at least 3.5 million people, of whom 1 million are indigenous peoples (including the recently naturalized Indians from Guatemala).<sup>8</sup> The indigenous population is divided into nine groups, each with its own language, customs and traditions, but all are historically related to the Mayan civilization. These are: the Choles, who live in the northern border between Chiapas and Tabasco; the Mochos who are in the southern area of the Soconusco; the Zoques who inhabit parts of the southern Soconusco, the Central Highlands and large areas northwest of Guatemala; the Tzotziles, Tzeltales, Tojolabales, Jacaltecos and Chules occupy the area between the Central Highlands and the Lacandón rain forests; and finally, the Lacandonos who live deep in the Lacandón forests. From these groups, it is the Tzeltales, Tzotziles and Choles that account for 86 percent of the indigenous population<sup>9</sup> of the state and, together with the Tojolabales, Zoques and Lacandonos have formed the social base for the 1994 Zapatista rebellion. (See Map 4.V.)

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<sup>8</sup>Although the 1990 census showed that Chiapas has 2.7 million inhabitants out of which 716 thousand were considered indigenous peoples, the latest statistics, as posted in the INEGI's internet homepage, indicate Chiapas has a population of approximately 3.5 million people, of which at least 1 million are indigenous peoples. The latter includes the newly declared citizen natives that came from Guatemala in the 1980s. See INEGI, *XI Censo General de Población y Vivienda*, 1990, as well as its supplement *Conteo de Población y Vivienda 1995*, located at <<http://www.inegi.gob.mx/homepara/conteo/>>

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. Graphic no. 5.

**Map 4.V. ETHNIC GROUPS AND HIGHLY FERTILE AREAS**



Source: Ana Esther Ceceña and Andrés Barreda, *Ibid.* p. 59.

*Marginalization and poverty in Chiapas*

Despite an abundance of strategic resources, Chiapas is, paradoxically, one of the most marginalized areas in Mexico. As Thomas Benjamin describes it, Chiapas is “a rich land with a poor people.”<sup>10</sup> Fully eighty percent of the population in Chiapas live in extreme poverty.<sup>11</sup> It has the highest rate (30 percent) of national illiteracy. A majority (60 percent) of those who are illiterate are indigenous peoples. One third (33 percent) of households in the state do not have electricity, and 80 percent of these households are in indigenous communities. Nine out of ten households in indigenous communities do not have running water and there is only one doctor for every 1,500 inhabitants.<sup>12</sup> It is, therefore, not surprising that there were 15,000 deaths in 1993 due to diseases caused by gastrointestinal infections.<sup>13</sup> The number one cause of mortality in Chiapas is malnutrition. Compared to other states, it has also the highest incidence of deaths due to malnutrition. Three-quarters

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<sup>10</sup> For an excellent account of the historical contradictions between Chiapas’ rich resources and extreme campesino and indigenous exploitation, see Thomas Benjamin’s classic work, *A Rich Land, A Rich People: Politics and Society in Modern Chiapas*, op. cit.

<sup>11</sup> Only the states of Guerrero and Oaxaca have a higher concentration of poverty and indigenous marginalization than Chiapas. See INEGI, “Situación de la pobreza,” in *Estadísticas del Medio Ambiente*, México 1994, pp. 26-26. PRONASOL, the National Institute for Statistics, Geography and Accounting (INEGI), and the National Council for the Population (CONAPO) have all indicated that Chiapas has the highest levels of poverty in the nation.

<sup>12</sup> As quoted in the journal *Proceso*, January 10, 1994, pp. 45-49.

<sup>13</sup> See Octavio Rodríguez Araujo, “Espacio y determinaciones de la rebelión chiapaneca, op. cit., p.21.



of its children (77 percent) are malnourished.<sup>14</sup> This situation is all the more tragic, given that the state is the second-highest producer of cattle, sheep, pigs, maize and other agricultural products.<sup>15</sup>

As Tables 1.V, 2.V. and 3.V. (appendix 1) show, the levels of marginalization and polarization are shocking. Moreover, as Map 5.V. shows (p. 155), the concentration of high marginalization is located in the geographical areas where the 1994 conflict began.

**Table 1. V.**

Percentage of Households Without Electricity, Drinking Water and Drainage in Mexico, in Chiapas and in Selected Municipalities Directly Involved in the 1994 Zapatista Uprising.

Area	Percentage of Households		
	Without Electricity	Without Drinking Water	Without Drainage
Mexico	12.5	20.6	36.4
Chiapas	33.1	41.6	58.8
Ocosingo	67.9	49.2	60.2
Altamirano	75.0	48.8	43.7
Las Margaritas	66.4	72.7	38.6

Source: Neil Harvey, "Rebellion in Chiapas: Rural Reforms, Campesino Radicalism, and the Limits of Salinismo" (Revised and updated), in *Transformation of Rural Mexico, Number 5*, La Jolla, Cal.: Center for US-Mexican Studies, UCSD, 1994. Original data from INEGI, 1992. Data from Ocosingo, Altamirano, and Las Margaritas are from the Consejo Nacional de Población (CONAPO) as cited in *La Jornada*, January 3, 1994, p.11.

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<sup>14</sup>*La Jornada*, January 7, 1994.

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*

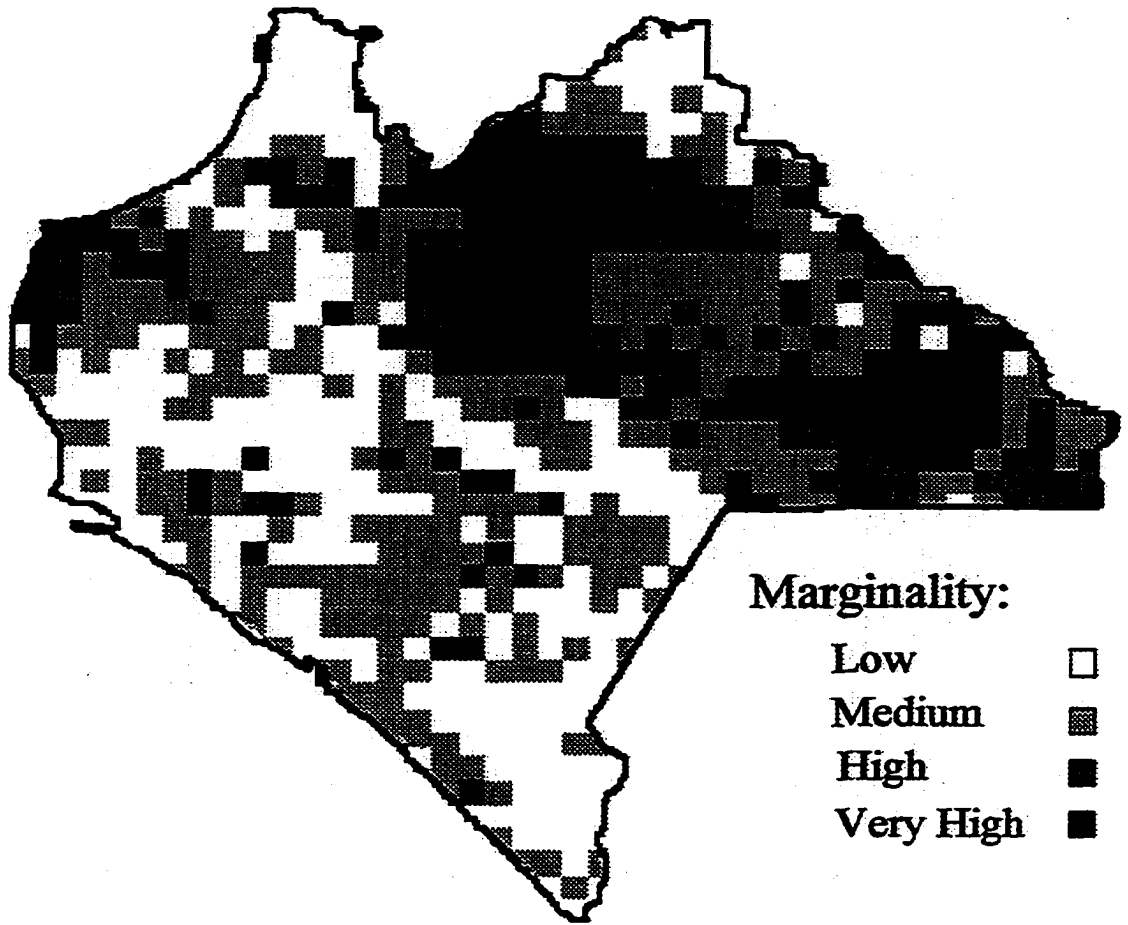
To understand in a more coherent manner the social and political impact of such marginalization and extreme poverty, it is important to note as in table 2.V., the main factors that determine the levels of marginalization as compared between the lowest marginalized municipality in Chiapas, the capital, Tuxtla Gutierrez and the highest (=1), San Juan Cancuc, located in the area of conflict and with the highest indigenous density

**Table 2. V.**  
**Comparative levels of marginalization and poverty between Tuxtla Gutierrez and San Juan Cancuc.**

Main Marginalization factors	Tuxtla Gutierrez	San Juan Cancuc
I. Illiterate population older than 15 years.	10.5%	66.54%
II. Population older than 15 years with uncompleted basic education.	29.5%	82.62%
III. Number of inhabitants with no toilets or sewage.	7.26%	95.70%
IV. Number of inhabitants with no electricity.	3.05%	90.50%
V. Number of inhabitants with no running water.	15.61%	88.96%
VI. Number of overcrowded dwellings.	54.50%	90.86%
VII. Number of households with dirt floors.	14.29%	98.61%
VIII. Towns of less than 5,000 inhabitants.	2.02%	75.62%
IX. Occupied population with an income of less than two minimum salaries (approximately US 107 dollars a month).	60.17%	96.28%

Source: Octavio Rodriguez Araujo, "Espacio y determinación de la rebelión Chiapaneca," op. cit., p. 19. Additional data for chart compiled from: CONAPO, *Sistema automatizado de la marginalización en México*, 1990.

**Map 5.V. Structural Marginality in Chiapas.**



Source: Philip Howard and Thomas Homer-Dixon, *Scarcity and Violent Conflict: The Case of Chiapas, Mexico*, op. cit.

Marginalization has characterized the indigenous population that has not stopped growing, as its land continues to shrink year by year.<sup>16</sup> Such growth, which has not stopped since 1950,<sup>17</sup> has not been accompanied by a substantial increase in the communities' standards of living which has actually deteriorated. This situation, which has increased *demand-induced scarcities* has not only been persistent but has worsened after 1982 when the state abruptly shrank its public expenditures. Although the De la Madrid regime (1982-1988) unveiled a major development program for Chiapas (Plan Chiapas) in which the World Bank was supposed to deliver \$300 million US for social projects, the funding arrangements were not finalized until three years later and the funds never materialized.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, even after Chiapas did receive the largest amounts of funding through Salinas' social program PRONASOL<sup>19</sup> (see Chapter IV), most of the funds were concentrated and re-directed to

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<sup>16</sup>The general growth of the different aboriginal peoples in Chiapas is of at least 4 percent a year while the average growth of the *ladinos* is of 3 percent. See Instituto de Geografía, Estadística e Informática (INEGI), *Perfil demográfico, XI censo general de población y vivienda*, 1990, Mexico, 1992.

<sup>17</sup>In 1950 the estimated Maya population was of 160,000, in 1980 of 390,000 and in 1990 of 617,250. For a historical review of such growth see: George Lovell, "The Highland Maya," an Essay for *The Cambridge History of the Native Peoples of the Americas*, Kingston, On.: Department of Geography, Queen's University at Kingston, 1998, p. 41.

<sup>18</sup>For the specifics and critiques of the very trumpeted *Plan Chiapas*, see Miguel de la Madrid Hurtado, "Chiapas: El Plan Chiapas," in *Experiencias de Desarrollo Regional*, Mexico: SEP, 1985, pp. 129-135; World Bank, "A Jab in the Arm for Plan Chiapas: World Bank Ready with Cash—But Who Will Benefit?" *Mexico and Central America Report*, May 3, 1985, p. 2.

<sup>19</sup>Even though PRONASOL's expenditures in Chiapas grew by 130 percent in 1989-90, 50 percent in 1990-91, 20 percent in 1991-92 and a meager 1 percent in 1992-94, the health, education and living standards have not changed since the 1970s. See Neil Harvey, *Rebellion in Chiapas*, op. cit., pp. 17-18, as well as Benjamin, op. cit., pp 246-47.

areas controlled by local caciques.<sup>20</sup> Those who resided in the poorest areas, such as the municipalities of Altamirano, Las Margaritas, and Ocosingo, were excluded from any serious regional development plans. It is important to note that it was from these same municipalities that 1994 conflict erupted.

The situation of the indigenous peoples is so severe that the Consultative Council of the National Solidarity Program (PRONASOL) has admitted that the state does not use a generalized system to measure marginalization. This lack of system is in itself an evidence of the marginalization of indigenous peoples with respect to federal and state social policies.

*Power, class, and social oppression in Chiapas*

For almost 500 years, Chiapas has been an integral part of a world order that has seen economic elites from Europe (and later, the US and Mexico itself) exploit its scarce but strategic resources. Its wealth has always been concentrated in a small group of national and international landowners linked to a set of national and international structures, that, from

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<sup>20</sup>The *caciques* are well-to-do-peasants who are also local key political figures that, in alliance with the dominant groups that after the Mexican Revolution, have been concentrated within the PRI/CNC structures, and are given political and economic power by granting them administrative powers in the municipal and *ejido* structures. As from this, they can get the best lands for their exclusive use with low interest rate credit lines. Some authors like Roger Bartra(1993), using Gramsci's description of the Italian Bonapartism called Caesarism, have described the Mexican agricultural structure, particularly after the Revolution, as a Mexican Caesarism, in which there is a clear differentiation between the well-to-do peasants that have supported the different hegemonic projects presented by the President and the political and economic elites linked to the PRI, and the average to pauperized and semi-proletariat peasants that have a radical and confrontational attitude toward the local bourgeoisie, the PRI/CNC and the *cacique*.

different metropolises, have increasingly demanded a higher rate of profits, and hence higher resource extraction. Within Chiapas, political power has been concentrated in the hands of what is called the “Chiapas’ family” or *familia chiapaneca*.<sup>21</sup> The *familia chiapaneca* is composed of about 120 extremely powerful families that have dominated the state since its formal annexation to Mexico in 1824. These families control the security apparatuses of the state through private armies known as *guardias blancas*. Moreover, they exercise a strong grip on all levels of the local government and have created an extremely tight network with their counterparts at the federal level. Even the high-ranking members of the federal army stationed in Chiapas are of local origin and, of course, related to the “family.”

The speed of Mexico’s inclusion in the North American economic project through NAFTA has made Chiapas a key economic region for its further development. This has not, however, meant prosperity for the people of Chiapas, particularly its indigenous and peasant populations. On the contrary, socioeconomic and political marginalization have always accompanied Mexico’s and Chiapas’ insertion into the transatlantic, regional, and now global, expansion, accumulation and reproduction of capital.<sup>22</sup> Ana Ceceña and Andrés Barreda have aptly described Chiapas’ tragic state:

The misery of the people in Chiapas is one of those marvels that goes hand in hand with globalization, and is inherent to the new modalities of the worldwide accumulation of

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<sup>21</sup>For details, see Antonio García de León, *Resistencia y Utopía*, op. cit., fn 3, pp. 204-205. See Thomas Benjamin, *A Rich Land, A Poor People*, op. cit.

<sup>22</sup>For the different stages of capital accumulation and reproduction in Chiapas as well as its regional, national and international role since the Spanish colonization, see Antonio Garcia de León, *Resistencia y Utopía: Memorial de agravios y crónica de revueltas y profecías acaecidas en la Provincia de Chiapas durante los últimos quinientos años de su historia (Tomos I y II)*, op.cit.

wealth. The local economic and political conflicts are the most explicit way in which international national and regional capital express their class contradictions. The enormous and strategic wealth of Chiapas have put it in the eye of the hurricane and, to a certain extent, they are the national image of the so awaited North American integration, for NAFTA and the proposal for modernization that accompanies it, embody the exacerbation of misery and the lack of protection of the productive resources, even if they are used to make our livelihood more precarious.<sup>23</sup>

Since the formation of the Mexican state, the historical and geographical links of Chiapas with Guatemala has meant an economic advantage in terms of Mexico's access to the Central American market, but it has also exacerbated the political and military tensions in the area. Furthermore, the region's geography, which is characterized by rain forests of difficult access, has made it an attractive gateway for smuggling and illegal drug trafficking. At the same time, it is also a region where, for the production of cash crops for export, the indigenous peoples of both nations have been exploited and marginalized on both sides of the border, regardless of their citizenship.

Although conflicts over land and resources have been a perennial characteristic of the history of Mexico, it is in states like Chiapas where such struggles have taken a more dramatic and tragic path. In Mexico, Chiapas was considered the "slave state": peonage and indebted servitude became the destiny of a people whose identities have been shaped, and their livelihood defined, in this rich and bountiful land for thousands of years. As Benjamin states, "Indebted servitude in Chiapas was not a lingering symptom of a past illness but a

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<sup>23</sup>Ana Esther Ceceña and Andrés Barreda, "Chiapas y sus recursos estratégicos", in Neus Espretae (ed.) *Chiapas*, Mexico: Instituto de Investigaciones Económicas (IIES) & Editorial Era, 1997, p. 53. (Translation is mine).

spreading cancer that enriched a few but impoverished many.<sup>24</sup> Indeed, indigenous peoples were not regarded as such, but instead were considered almost as “beasts” possessed of a “natural laziness” that justified the oppression and abuse inflicted on them. Miguel Utrilla, former governor of Chiapas (late 19th century), said that they deserved the abuse “because [they] lack ... education ..., [because of] their stern and obstinate character, [because of their] laziness which is proverbial by custom and habit, and because it is the only way of maintaining their obedience.”<sup>25</sup> Today, Chiapas, like other states with a high percentage of indigenous peoples, still provides servitude in the form of cheap labour.

### *Scarcity and conflict*

The condition of scarcity and the struggle to survive as a unique culture have also been part and parcel of the experience that accompanied the original inhabitants of Chiapas. The history of Chiapas, as much of Latin America's, should be understood, as Bryan Roberts contends, “in terms of the struggles of various regional elites to expand their economies through a pervasive reshaping of local society.”<sup>26</sup> The face of Chiapas' society has been “reshaped” as one of constant class and ethnic struggles in which the dispossessed and

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<sup>24</sup>Benjamin, *A Rich Land, A Poor People*, op. cit., p. 28.

<sup>25</sup>As quoted in Benjamin, *ibid*.

<sup>26</sup>See Bryan R. Roberts, “State and Region in Latin America: The View from Below,” in G. A. Blanck, R. Buve, and L. Van Vroonhen (eds.), *State and Region in Latin America: A Workshop*, Amsterdam: CEDLA, 1981, p. 20.



exploited majority have had to contend with at least three kinds of environmental scarcities —*demand-induced scarcity, supply-induced scarcity and structural scarcity*<sup>27</sup>— within the context of social, economic and political subjugation. Philip Howard and Thomas Homer-Dixon have alluded to these scarcities as determining causes of violent conflict in Chiapas.<sup>28</sup> Neil Harvey points to political consensus and legitimacy, levels of which have been very low to begin with, that started to seriously fracture after 1982, finally collapsing in 1992 when the distribution of land and its communal tenure was no longer protected by the Constitution. These factors, in conjunction with the constant exploitation and abuse of the indigenous peoples, have provoked a set of subjective and objective conditions that led to the violent conflict.<sup>29</sup>

Perhaps it is worth noting that the economic history of Chiapas, understood within the expansion of capital since the Spanish conquest, fits clearly within the five hypotheses as presented in André Gunder Frank's work on development in Latin America. These are: (1) Chiapas' development, as well as most of the southern part of Mexico, has been subordinate and limited by its satellite status; (2) Chiapas has never been able to 'loosen ' its satellite

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<sup>27</sup>Demand-induced scarcity is caused by population growth or increased per capita consumption; supply-induced scarcity is caused by degradation and depletion of environmental resources; and structural scarcity is caused by an unbalanced distribution of resources affecting mostly the marginalized populations. For further details regarding the correlation with these concepts and security issues, see Thomas Homer-Dixon, "Environmental Scarcities and Violent Conflict: Evidence from Cases," *International Security* 19, 1: 8-9.

<sup>28</sup>See Philip Howard and Thomas Homer-Dixon, *Environmental Scarcity and Violent Conflict: The Case of Chiapas, Mexico*. op. cit.

<sup>29</sup>See Neil Harvey, "Rebellion in Chiapas: Rural Reforms, Campesino Radicalism, and the Limits of Salinismo," in *Transformation of Rural Mexico*, Num. 5, (revised and updated) La Jolla, Cal. US: Center for US-Mexican Studies, UCSD, 1994.

status; therefore, it has never been able to develop a strong local economy (most of its agricultural production and light industry is directly tied to the economic metropolises of Europe and North America); (3) Chiapas has a semi-feudal structure of production and power; (4) In Chiapas, the latifundium, which started as a commercial enterprise, has created for itself the political and social institutions that allowed it to expand capital, labour and land in order to respond to increased demands in the international or domestic markets, regardless of the social disruptions caused by such expansion; and (5) at present, the large agro-industrial enterprises or haciendas in Chiapas have seen the demand for their products as well as their productive capacity decline, particularly after the depression of coffee prices in 1989. As a result of this, exploitation and social marginalization have become more persistent and, in areas of high indigenous population density, even increased.<sup>30</sup>

Because of the high concentration of low paid workers in the depressed agricultural sector of Chiapas (58 percent for the general population and 83 percent for indigenous peoples), it is in this sector where social and violent conflicts are mainly located. Therefore, it is important to understand and stress the dialectical relationships derived from the main forms of landholdings that utilize labour and their structural linkages to domestic and foreign capital.

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<sup>30</sup>See André Gunder Frank, *Latin America: Underdevelopment or Revolution*, New York: Monthly Review Press, 1969, ch.1. For a classic study of Mexico's dependency structures, the formation of the latifundia and its social and political impacts, see Francois Chevalier, "La formación de los grandes latifundios en México," in *Problemas agrícolas e industriales de México*, VIII, No. 1, 1956. For a contemporary reconsideration of this model and its present articulation with a Gramscian perspective, see Roger Bartra, *Agrarian Structure and Political Power in Mexico* (trans. Stephen K. Ault), Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993.

*Landholdings, class, conflict and Racial Discrimination*

Chiapas has both private and public landholdings. Private landholdings are vestiges of the old Spanish system of land tenure that was incorporated into Mexico when the Spaniards arrived in the 16th century. These are the *latifundia*, *hacienda*, *finca*, *ranchos* and *monterias*. Mexico has also public lands comprised by *ejidos* or collective farms, and a small area of communal lands that are actually ancestral lands of indigenous peoples.

**Private landholdings**

•*Latifundia*. These are private estates that were supposed to have been dismantled in accordance with Article 27 of the 1917 Constitution but still exist as large agro-industrial enterprises.<sup>31</sup> Illegal renting or “name lending,” that is, assigning neighboring land titles to family members, political allies or other investors related to the landowners, are also a common practice. Since the 19th century, most *latifundia* have been dedicated to the production of cash crops for export such as coffee, bananas, cacao, sugar and soybeans. Coffee, in particular, has been controlled primarily by German and American families who emigrated to the Soconusco area in the mid-19th century and own at least 45 percent of the richest lands for coffee production.<sup>32</sup> Traditionally, indigenous groups from the Central

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<sup>31</sup>Existing estates cannot be legally larger than 5,000 hectares.

<sup>32</sup>See Benjamin, *A Rich Land, A Poor People*, op. cit. For historical details regarding the number of properties and land hectares by nationality since the 19th century, see Antonio Garcia de

Highlands and from Guatemala (around 80,000 to 120,000 seasonal workers) have provided the required labor.<sup>33</sup>

Labor conditions in the *latifundia* have been characterized as being extremely harsh. Most of the seasonal workers from the Central Highlands are part of an old system of exploitation called *baldiaje* or “indebted servitude.” Although law now bans this practice, it has continued in many *latifundia* where the owners, in collusion with local caciques who are usually members of the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI), have controlled and shared many more hectares of fertile land than those permitted by the Agrarian Law. This system of *baldiaje* has led to the rise of a third class called the *enganchadores* or “contractors.” These contractors guarantee the landowners a certain amount of seasonal workers and are usually related to the local caciques. Because the law has also banned this practice, the *latifundia* has resorted to the hiring the services of *jornaleros* or “day wage workers” to guarantee that there will be enough workers. In most cases, these *jornaleros* earn less than one minimum salary (\$2-3/day). Most *jornaleros* are *ladino* (métis) peasants and small numbers of indigenous groups that are not originally from the state. These workers either join forces with the local caciques that control the local PRI corporate structures, or organize independent unions, political associations or join forces with the national leftist

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Léon, *Resistencia y Utopia*, Vol. 1, op.cit., fn 3, pp. 172-202

<sup>33</sup>Luis Raúl Salvado, *The Other Refugees: A Study of Nonrecognized Guatemalan Refugees in Chiapas, Mexico*, Washington, DC: Hemispheric Migration Project, Georgetown University, 1988, p. 13.

parties.<sup>34</sup> Because most of these workers do not belong to any specific local indigenous group, they have not developed strong political relations with the latter. Class conflicts that derive from these social relations of production have been limited mostly to the racial and social origins of its main actors. However, as we will further see, after the 1994 Zapatista upheaval, a stronger connection has developed between the armed indigenous groups and those who have not directly participated in their struggle but have supported the former through political and other solidarity actions.

- *Haciendas* or *fincas*. These are private estates with a similar size as the latifundia. The social relations of production in these properties have been characterized not only by the use of seasonal workers but also by *peonaje*, a system similar to the *baldiaje* but where workers actually live on the property almost like slaves. This system became socially and economically institutionalized during the second half of the 19th century as a partial solution to the problem of labour scarcity particularly in the Central Valley. Because *peonaje* facilitated the expansion of commercial agriculture, it was very popular among most cash crop producers. As Friedrich Katz notes:

The isolation of many southern regions, the lack of industry which would have competed with the estate owners for scarce laborers, the strengthening of both hacienda police forces and the organs of the state made it extremely difficult for peons to circumvent their owners . . . On the whole, the landowners were successful in the economic as well as social and political fields. Production soared, resistance was extremely limited, and the ensuing stability attracted new capital and investment.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup>For a historical and detailed account of the diverse classes and their political organization, see Benjamin, *A Rich Land, A Poor People*, op. cit., particularly pp. 149-195.

<sup>35</sup>Friedrich Katz, "Mexico: Restored Republic and Porfiriato, 1867-1910," in Bethell, ed., *The Cambridge History of Latin America*, Volume V, c. 1870-1930, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986, p. 55.

The families of these large estates comprised not only the most powerful economic class in Chiapas but also the most prominent political and social elites that have formed the so-called familia chiapaneca.<sup>36</sup> The familia chiapaneca, as well as the caciques who became very powerful after the Mexican Revolution, have kept the state submerged in a historical lethargy with regard to the new demands and forms of capital accumulation. At the same time, these new forms (both at the national and international level) have pushed the Mexican state to change drastically the legal and political frameworks that have supported, to a great extent, traditional forms of capital accumulation. Indeed, these older political and legal frameworks have also protected some forms of communal land tenure. This situation has exacerbated several existing economic and political contradictions, as different sectors try to cope with the changing situation in different ways: (1) landowners are forced to find new ways of extracting surplus value; (2) caciques react with higher degrees of violence and impunity to hold on to their economic and political privileges; (3) agricultural workers lower their already depressed living standards, as wages decrease and labour conditions worsen; and (4) indigenous peoples confront higher degrees of political and economic pressures to leave their traditional territories toward poorer lands or of difficult access.

The haciendas and fincas, or the large agro-industrial and commercial enterprises, will continue to produce for an expanding market for goods such as coffee, cacao or sugar. However, the international pressures for depressing the prices of such commodities might continue. Therefore, even if there are large investments of capital to intensify production and

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<sup>36</sup>See fn 8.

reduce costs, these large-scale systems of production will continue to exploit labour. There is already a large pool of low-paid workers and indigenous peoples who are being displaced from their lands. The situation is especially hard for the indigenous people because, for centuries, their exploitation has been justified not only for reasons of capital accumulation but also because of their race. As Carlos Montemayor has stated: "This discrimination is the origin, to a great extent, of the economic inequalities as well as the land confiscations and the lack of respect and security for the indigenous communities."<sup>37</sup> Although there is an ongoing debate as to the causes of racial discrimination in Mexico as well as in Chiapas, it is the struggle for scarce resources, as well as the internal contradictions of the capitalist system of accumulation, that has transformed this problem into violent conflict. It is a struggle between two antagonistic conceptualizations of land, wealth, security and livelihood.

•*Ranchos and Monterias*: These are private lands that do not necessarily develop around large estates. Although there are many definitions of *rancho*, in Chiapas they refer to the cattle, sheep and pig farms that are for grazing and therefore are the largest and most depleting predators of the environment. Cattle grazing has grown so much that it now occupies 30 percent of the state's total land area.<sup>38</sup> It has been so extensive in the past fifty years that it has produced what is called a *ganaderización* or cattle dependency of the state's

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<sup>37</sup>As quoted in an article by American journalist Sally Hughes appeared in *El Financiero*, January 9, 1994.

<sup>38</sup>Philip Howard and Thomas Homer-Dixon, *op. cit.*

economy.<sup>39</sup> Perhaps the 'hottest' points of conflict have resulted from the forceful expulsion of indigenous and campesino populations from their territories and lands that are slowly transformed to grazing pastures. The owners of these ranchos are mainly ladino caciques that have been politically supported by the PRIs corporate structures such as the National Campesino Confederation (CNC). They have fundamentally relied on the extraction of surplus value through an extensive exploitation of land.

The cattle's industry has become economically and politically so powerful that it has been able to buy out small farmers and *ejidatarios* or rent out depleted or unused lands. The rancho owners have expelled, with the use of the guardias blancas, thousands of indigenous peoples from their territories. This predatory impetus has provoked a strong reaction from independent *ejidatarios* and indigenous communities that, particularly since the 1970s, have tried to reoccupy their lands. Unfortunately, even if these lands could be recaptured, they are now completely exhausted. It is important to note that cattle grazing is not a unique problem of Chiapas but of all Southern Mexico, and the social tensions that it has provoked could still engulf all the region in a violent conflict of yet unknown consequences.

On the other hand, *monterias* are private logging companies that, since the early 19th century have exploited the fine woods of the Lacandón Rain Forest. Extreme measures of exploitation have also characterized these monterias, in which *baldiaje* is widely used. Most

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<sup>39</sup>For the disproportionate increase of cattle grazing between 1950 and 1993, see Benjamin, *A Rich Land, A Poor People*, op. cit., p. 233. See also Philip Howard and Thomas Homer-Dixon, *Environmental Scarcity and Violent Conflict: The Case of Chiapas, Mexico*, op. cit., p. 14.



of its labor force is composed of indigenous peoples from the Central Highlands.<sup>40</sup> Because of their isolation, the working conditions of this logging sites are sometimes worse than those of the haciendas or fincas. Moreover, the levels of a land depredation that these logging companies are provoking are so high, they are in effect destroying an entire ecosystem. The size of Lacandón Forest, which is the last tract of tropical rainforest in Mexico, and one of the most important bio-reserves in the world, is being reduced since 1974 by eight percent per year, and in some regions by as much as twelve percent.<sup>41</sup> This extreme deforestation by private cattle grazers and logging companies have not only been accompanied by the intensification of a *supply-induced scarcity* but also by a complete discrimination against the one million indigenous peoples who not only need the land to survive but who also consider it as a territory that has supported their identities for centuries.

### Public lands

•*Ejido*. Although Mexican legislation does not define clearly what an *ejido* is, it can be described as a form that, as Roger Bartra states, “intermingles various types of property: state or nationalized, corporate, communal and private.”<sup>42</sup> It is based on collective property and, before the 1992 changes to Article 27 of the Mexican Constitution, lands under this regime could not be alienated, leased or transferred to non-citizens of the community. The

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<sup>40</sup>For a detailed account of this system, see Benjamin, *A Rich Land, A Poor People*, op. cit., pp. 89, 116 and 150.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., pp. 9-10.

<sup>42</sup>Roger Bartra, *Agrarian Structure and Political Power in Mexico*, op. cit., p. 94.

*ejido* is a product of a legal process called *dotación* (endowment). In other words, the lands are *petitioned* and *received* by a particular community nucleus that has resided in the locality for at least six months prior to the date of application. These lands are therefore not purchased but obtained free: they are derived from expropriated haciendas, public lands or other private estates that have had a dubious legal status. The contemporary *ejido* originated from the Plan de Ayala (November 25, 1912) of the more radical wing of the Mexican Revolution led by Emiliano Zapata, which proclaimed a national campaign to return land from haciendas to the villages. However, it was the hegemonic bloc that was at that time dominated by the central and northern bourgeoisie that benefited from the expropriation.

The legal application of the *ejido* is found in Article 27 of the 1917 Constitution, and in the Agrarian Codes of 1934 and 1971. In Chiapas, the 1927 Agrarian Law of the state protected the *ejido*. Despite the principles of social equality that form the basis of the *ejido*, the state and its hegemonic bloc have steered, managed and controlled the land by organizing most ejidatarios under the umbrella of the Confederación Nacional Campesina (CNC), one of the corporate structures of the PRI.

After the Mexican Revolution, it was important to recapture large lands from the more conservative and reactionary sectors that used large areas of land in a barely productive and inefficient way. In this sense, the *ejido* was an agro-industrial system controlled by the state to boost, at least in theory, the operation of cooperatives and other kinds of production systems. The problem, however, is that *ejidos* are based on a 'condominium' of small and medium size parcels that are often unable to produce large amounts of crops in an efficient

way.

Nevertheless, the most important problem that the *ejido* has faced is its misuse by the PRI caciques, who have reproduced many vices of the latifundia. Some authors like Roger Bartra have even opined that the *ejido* has replaced the latifundia with the minifundia, or highly centralized production units controlled by the caciques and their family members and key PRI representatives.<sup>43</sup> Although Bartra is right to a certain extent, the *ejido* was at least a system of agricultural production that has created the legal and political conditions for a more equal distribution of land and wealth.

Other than the *ejidos* that were directly linked to the PRI, it is important to mention that there were several independent *ejidos* which have had to straddle between the large private agro-industrial enterprises and the *ejidos* linked to the PRI/CNC, but which have at least been able to develop a more independent and community-based system of agricultural production. Their main problem has been access to sufficient credit. The latter has been controlled by the Rural Bank (BANRURAL) which is known by its flagrant use of discretionary powers and complete lack of accountability.

Despite the political and legal complexities related to the *ejido*, it was from this system of collective production that most peasants and indigenous groups have been able to organize and challenge local and federal authorities. The independent *ejidos*, and the agricultural unions and associations as well, have carried out a historical struggle to push the state for price guaranties as well as for political and economic support for alternative forms

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<sup>43</sup>Ibid., pp. 95-96.

of production, as well as to secure access to domestic and foreign markets. However, since 1982 their struggle has been to survive, given that the state began to retrench from the agricultural sector, thus hitting the independent *ejidos* harder. This has been accompanied by a continuous decline in the international prices of coffee and other export crops, particularly since 1989.<sup>44</sup>

Despite the political and social stability that this form of property has generated since the Mexican Revolution, its fate was sealed after the radical reforms of Article 27 of the Constitution. The distribution of land for collective uses has come to an end and land can now be sold, rented and transferred even to foreign capital. Although the Constitution has not abolished the *ejido*, for states like Chiapas, where the delays in land distribution have considerably lagged regarding the applications sent since the 1930s,<sup>45</sup> the reforms of Article 27 have had a social impact of incalculable consequences. For those who have been able to maintain their *ejidos* within the PRI/CNC structures, loyalty towards the PRI regime has been quite consistent; however, for the independent *ejidos* to whom credit is unavailable, as well as for the at least 100,000 landless campesinos and indigenous peoples, such reforms have become a direct threat to their survival.<sup>46</sup>

• *Communal Land.* Although communal properties represent only five percent of the

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<sup>44</sup>See Benjamin, *A Rich Land, A Poor People*, op. cit., p. 239.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., p. 21. See also, Neil Harvey, "Rebellion in Chiapas: Rural Reforms, Campesino Radicalism and the Limits of Salinismo," op. cit., pp. 6-9; and Philip Howard and Thomas Homer-Dixon, *Environmental Scarcity and Violent Conflict: The Case of Chiapas, Mexico*, op. cit., pp. 16-21.

<sup>46</sup>Howard and Homer-Dixon, *ibid.*, p. 18.

country's land area,<sup>47</sup> it has been the most important and dominant form of tenure for the ten million indigenous peoples of Mexico who live in complete marginality. Its social and political importance cannot be disregarded. Roger Bartra states that:

Communal property is the most evident crystallization of social relations that imply a close union between the worker and the natural conditions of production. Not only does it reveal this close union but it also expresses very strong forms of collective cohesiveness and cooperative labor in the heart of communities dominated by relations of production oriented in the consumption of use values.<sup>48</sup>

The "union" between subject and nature has been the cornerstone of survival for the indigenous peoples of Mexico. Their identities are not only founded in their particular cultural expressions but also in their attachment to their ancestral lands. Moreover, beyond its religious and mythical connotations, land is the basis for the modern notion of sovereignty. Even in a more interdependent world order, it is still the fundamental, legal and political image for the survival of the nation-state.

The history of the formation of the modern nation-state in Mexico has been characterized by the struggle to find an internal balance between those who have been integrated by force to a political and economic project that has always operated with a double standard, and those who have harvested the fruits from the structures of social and economic exploitation. On one hand, the indigenous communities and their land have been treated as an integral part of the nation-state, particularly after the Mexican Revolution; on the other hand, they have been considered all along as a problem hindering the so-called

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<sup>47</sup>Roger Bartra, *Agrarian Structure and Political Power in Mexico*, op. cit., p. 80.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., pp. 79-80.

“modernization” process. The communal lands of the indigenous peoples were, in spite of the Agrarian Code of 1934 that reestablished a system of communal lands, doomed to vanish, because the pressures from the expansion of the capitalist system both domestically and internationally could not but destroy such lands and the cultures they have supported. Nevertheless, this process, as has been in most cases where there is a large population of indigenous peoples such as that in Chiapas, has been slow and plagued by contradictions. The indigenous peoples have not only been losing their lands but also their identities and, in the struggle to regain these, they have had to respond with violence, e.g., the uprisings of the Yaquis in Sonora or the “Caste Wars” in Yucatan and in Chiapas (1869).<sup>49</sup>

Because of their historical foundations that go back to more than 500 years, these communal lands in Chiapas have given class struggles an ethnic or racial dimension. Indeed, the indigenous peoples and their social relations of production have always been characterized as a national problem or “problema indígena” (“Indian problem”).<sup>50</sup>

Moreover, because communal property has always represented the cradle of such “problem,” it has been attacked and destroyed, thus intensifying class/ethnic conflicts in states like Chiapas. It is a sector that has persistently suffered from state repression and the atrocities of the *guardias blancas*. However, because of the national character of the indigenous populations who, despite their political and economic exclusion, are citizens of Mexico, the attack on their most fundamental institutions has become an attack on the nation-

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<sup>49</sup>For the “Caste War” in Chiapas see Benjamin, *A Rich Land, A Poor People*, op. cit.

<sup>50</sup>See Roger Bartra, *Agrarian Structure and Political Power in Mexico*, op. cit., pp.168-188.

state. Therefore, this is now a national security problem that, ironically, cannot be resolved by the state whose political and security apparatuses have been carrying out such attacks, in the first place. To resolve this historical problem, the federal state, as well as the state of Chiapas, has put forward a set of policies aimed not only to “nationalize” the indigenous populations but also to improve their socioeconomic conditions. Unfortunately, these policies, that were institutionalized in 1950 with the formation of the Instituto Nacional Indigenista (National Indigenous Institute, INI) and by the indigenist ideology coined as “indigenismo”, have been characterized as extremely paternalistic and populist. These policies were, as Thomas Benjamin quite accurately suggests, “*Indigenismo* became a tenet of the ideology of the Mexican Revolution, replacing the racist notion that native ethnicity was uncivilized and therefore prevented Mexico from becoming a great nation.”<sup>51</sup>

The Zapatista upheaval of 1994 reopened one issue that, at a national level, had been deeply buried in the past, namely, the so-called “indigenous problem.” It is a subject that has divided a nation founded on the principles of “equality, freedom and fraternity.” Certainly, if racism is conceived only within the legal framework, the Mexican state would have been a paragon of what a modern, secular and non-racist state should be. However, a broader and deeper analysis shows that this is far from true. Behind the word *Indian* one discovers a network of exploitation that, as Bartra states, “seems to recreate the old colonial domination of the Indian in new forms”.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>51</sup>Benjamin, *A Rich Land, A Poor People*, op. cit., p. 202.

<sup>52</sup>Roger Bartra, *Agrarian Structure and Political Power in Mexico*, op. cit., p. 168.

Although the indigenous world has been subsumed into the “modern” state, their presence as unique peoples has haunted a Mexico that has either shut its eyes to Indian existence, or treated them as a “historical accident,” deserving only of pity and compassion. These attitudes have cut across classes and created a national discourse in which indigenous peoples and their worlds are seen as an inferior expression of social and economic organization. It was assumed that the notion of citizenship would resolve this ‘problem’. However, the question needs to be asked whether or not there can be a neutral conceptualization of the word *citizen*. Indeed, a strictly positivist legal perspective would not conform to sociological, economic and political realities. The so-called secular principles, although considered in the liberal tradition as devoid of any subjectivity, have clearly been based on a complex amalgamation of indigenous traditions and Roman Catholicism. In a country where most of the population is Roman Catholic, this is a fundamental factor that has to be seriously taken into consideration for a thorough understanding of social conflict.<sup>53</sup> Moreover, in Chiapas, as well as in most southern states, there has been a historical confrontation between a growing Evangelical church and a divided Catholic Church. Religion, articulated with ethnicity and socioeconomic inequalities, has been a determining factor for structural conflict.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>53</sup>Although there is no official religion in Mexico, as the constitution guarantees separation of church and state, Roman Catholicism is practiced by more than 95 percent of the population. See: *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 1994, “Mexico: Physical and Human Geography: The People,” US: Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc. 1994.

<sup>54</sup>For an excellent study on the influence of the Roman Catholic Church in the formation of the Mexican state and its particular influence and characteristics in Chiapas, see J. Charlene Floyd, “A Theology of Insurrection? Religion and Politics in Mexico,” in *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol.



When these acute economic inequalities that historically have been based on ethnicity are expressed by social violence, ethnicity and race begin to appear in the forefront of the conflict. As Rodolfo Stavenhagen suggests:

It is not that a racist ideology is constituted and therefore, under that ideology, métics discriminate or kill Indians, but that in conditions of tension and conflict between groups that cultural identities, biological reasons or socioeconomic conditions differentiate, that the racist reaction is generated and reproduced with more strength.

This is what has happened in Chiapas, with the conflict that began on January 1, 1994. Here, racist expressions and arguments have been expressed among the local dominant groups: *finqueros*, ranchers, landowners, business peoples, intermediaries and government officials that perceived that their interests were being threatened, and therefore had a violent reaction as a response to the occupation of their lands by different indigenous groups that on their part were claiming they had expelled them from such lands.<sup>55</sup>

It cannot be denied that racism has been present in many subtle, and not-so-subtle ways, and that the Zapatista upheaval unmasked a crude reality that has determined, to a large extent, the conditions of political and economic oppression in which most indigenous peoples have lived for more than 500 years. This reality is part of a process that has been clearly linked to the forms of exploitation that have predominated in particular regions. Before the capitalist system of production was introduced in Chiapas, the reasons for exploiting indigenous peoples had a racial dimension to them. However, after the primitive accumulation of capital ended and Chiapas' economy was integrated into the national and

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50, No.1, Summer 1996, pp. 142-166. For inter-religious tensions and conflict in the present violence in Chiapas, see Carlos Tello, *La Rebelión de las Cañadas*, Mexico: Editorial Cal y Arena, 1995; Michael Tangeman, *Mexico at Crossroads: Politics, the Church, and the Poor*, New York: Orbis Books, 1997; Julio Moguel, "Chiapas: La geopolítica del miedo," in *La Jornada*, March 11, 1997.

<sup>55</sup>Interview with Yolanda Tovar Nieves in *La Jornada del Campo*, supplement of *La Jornada*, May 3, 1994, p. 4.

international capitalist systems, indigenous peoples became part of the working class and/or campesino class. Thus, the indigenous forms of production based on the natural economy have basically disappeared and have been absorbed into the capitalist mode of production.<sup>56</sup> However, a sociological and political analysis will reveal that a racial discourse and practice have existed for centuries and, during conflictive conjunctures, reappear with a strong thrust.

From this perspective, a common phenomenon can be identified that has characterized the political and social integration of the indigenous peoples in the national state. This is the use and manipulation of the local forms of organization by the dominant political, economic and religious groups, particularly after the Revolution. Bartra suggests that this phenomenon "has appeared in two basic forms: (1) in the so-called cacique system; and (2) in an articulation of official national administrative mechanisms with the patterns of native organization."<sup>57</sup> For Chiapas, the cacique system has been the predominant system by which indigenous peoples were forced by political, economic and repressive means, to integrate into the PRI/CNC corporate structures. The political linkages between local communities, the central and federal governments are monopolized by the caciques, who are often indigenous persons too. This system has assured a despotic control over the indigenous communities that might otherwise threaten to regain their political and economic power and therefore, disrupt the flow of commodities to the national and international metropolises.

In Chiapas, as in most states with a high percentage of indigenous peoples, the cacique

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<sup>56</sup>In this sense, if we take a strictly economic view, there is no such thing as a peculiar Bourgeois-Indian form of economic exploitation.

<sup>57</sup>Roger Bartra, *Agrarian Structure and Political Power in Mexico*, op. cit., p. 182.

system, together with the intrusion of the state through the public educational system, has consistently, and in the name of national security, tried to integrate the millions of indigenous peoples into the hegemonic projects of the dominant blocs. For prominent liberals like Justo Sierra (Secretary of Education during the Porfirio Díaz regime) as well as Matías Romero (Secretary for Foreign Affairs also during the Díaz regime), the indigenous peoples and their conceptions of land and wealth were interpreted as a national security problem for they were considered as extremely vulnerable vis-a-vis the US and European expansionist ideas of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. In the 1950s, with the creation of the National Indigenist Institute (INI), the state gave the “indigenous problem” top priority in the government agenda. For the consolidation of the ‘modern’ nation-state and the hegemonic project of the post-revolutionary bloc, the state had to “civilize” the Indian or pay the consequences of persistent economic backwardness, external interventions and social conflict.<sup>58</sup> This process of integration has gone through a cycle of racism, demagoguery, technocratism, neoliberalism and racism again.<sup>59</sup> It is a cycle of repression that is both direct (e.g., through unjustified imprisonments, disappearances or torture of indigenous leaders), and indirect (through constant manipulation of the legal structures). However, the most subtle but most dramatic of these repressive measures has been the negation of the values and traditions of the millions of indigenous peoples who are still trying to find their place in the Mexican nation-state. This

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<sup>58</sup>One of the most influential works was by Manuel Gamio, *Forjando patria*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Mexico: Editorial Porrúa, 1960. For the articulation between the consolidation of the nation-state and *indigenismo*, see Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán, “El Indigenismo y su contribución a la idea de nacionalidad,” *América Indígena* 29, 1969, pp. 397-435.

<sup>59</sup>Roger Bartra, *Agrarian Structure and Political Power in Mexico*, op. cit., p. 183-84.

negation, as Enrique Florescano suggests, has “nurtured the birth of an exclusive social conscience that led to the intolerance toward the other”.<sup>60</sup> The negation of the indigenous values and traditions has become, particularly since the 18th century, the scapegoats for the nation’s economic and political backwardness. By openly declaring an ‘indigenous problem,’ the state, even with its romantic and paternalistic views regarding the indigenous peoples in the 1920s and 30s, drew a very negative image of the indigenous peoples. The national consciousness was, thus, deeply entrenched with such images. Moreover, the ideology of “modernity” or Liberalism justified the direct negation of the indigenous values and traditions, and repeated, albeit more subtly, the idea of the Indian as “backward” and against history. This predominant ideology, implemented within a technocratic or liberal frame, was extremely powerful during the Porfirio Díaz regime. Moreover, after 1982, when the indigenous peoples perceived that the liberalization process meant a direct threat to both their territories and their cultural identities, their demands of self-determination heightened.<sup>61</sup> The state-ethnic confrontation, therefore, was exacerbated. It is in this sense that natives, who without legal doubt, are Mexican citizens with all their rights, have been wrongly accused of being an indirect threat to the nation’s security.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>60</sup>Enrique Florescano, “Luchas indígenas y campesinas,” in *La Jornada Semanal*, February 1, 1998. This will appear in his book, *Etnia, Estado y Nación: Ensayo sobre las identidades colectivas en México*, Mexico: Editorial Aguilar, 1998.

<sup>61</sup>It is important to note that for the indigenous peoples of Mexico self-determination does not equal to secession but a high level of political and socioeconomic autonomy.

<sup>62</sup>Although the indigenous peoples have not been directly addressed as directly putting in jeopardy the security of the nation, their customs, traditions and values, which to survive need high levels of territorial and political autonomy, are seen as factors that can fragment or weaken the unity of the nation-state and hence become a threat to its security. This idea was actually expressed by the

This situation has put the indigenous peoples in a very difficult position. On the one hand, they are considered Mexican citizens, but on the other hand they are denied their uniqueness as an integral part of the nation-state. It bears stating that, although two major invasions have marked Mexico's history (the US in 1847 and France in 1864), as well as several US military incursions and other external pressures, the indigenous peoples have been the last to carry out any attack on the territorial integrity of the nation-state. The problem is whether or not indigenous peoples could be integrated by peaceful means to a hegemonic project that has always excluded them if they did not radically change their traditions and values. The conflict between those who dominate, or have adapted to the predominant political and economic structures and their ideologies, and the ten million indigenous peoples of Mexico will continue until they finally become "modern" citizens of the nation-state. As Bartra has stated, "inter ethnic relations do not simply reflect the particular features of social contradictions in the rural zones; instead, they are principally an ideological system that enables these contradictions to persist. They are an ideal image in the mind of the dominant

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present Secretary of the Interior, Francisco Labastida Ochoa, in several occasions. For the Secretary's declarations and those of the Executive as well as the policies that are framed within a national security context, see *La Jornada*, February 27, 1998, "Revela el EZLN las observaciones gubernamentales," internet version, <[http://serpiente.dgsca.unam.mx/jornada/4\\_puntos.htm](http://serpiente.dgsca.unam.mx/jornada/4_puntos.htm)>; *La Jornada*, March 12, 1998, "Nuevo proyecto de reforma indígena, anuncia Labastida," <<http://serpiente.dgsca.unam.mx/jornada/iniciativa.html>>; *La Jornada*, March 12, 1998, "Labastida: en la reforma indígena, no más concesiones ni tiempo al EZLN," <<http://serpiente.dgsca.unam.mx/jornada/reforma.html>>; *La Jornada*, March 16, 1998, "Labastida: no se usará la fuerza en Chiapas," <<http://serpiente.dgsca.unam.mx/jornada/labastida.html>>; and Salvador Corro, "Posturas irreconciliables en materia de derechos indígenas: Guerra política y propagandística del gobierno para obligar al EZLN a reanudar las negociaciones," *Proceso* No. 1112, 22 de febrero de 1998, internet version, <<http://www.proceso.com.mx/1112/1112n01.html>>

classes that functions as an aid in the exploitation of the dominated classes.”<sup>63</sup>

Some state organizations like the INI, the Secretariat for Education and the more contemporary Secretariat for Social Development (SEDESOC) have played an important role in helping some indigenous groups to better cope with their forceful integration into an economic and political system. However, it was mostly through the independent peasant organizations, together with the more activist sectors of the Roman Catholic Church in Chiapas and in other states with high levels of marginality, that indigenous peoples were empowered to begin to demand their place in an uncontested multinational state.

It was perhaps the conjunction between the ideas of liberation and empowerment, as promoted by the *catequistas*<sup>64</sup> from Diocese of San Cristobal de la Casas in Chiapas (led by Bishop Samuel Ruiz) and the political work of independent peasant organizations, that started such empowerment. The event that paved the way for a closer secular-religious relationship was perhaps the 1974 Indigenous Congress, commemorating the 500<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of the first Bishop of Chiapas, Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas, revered historically

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<sup>63</sup>Roger Bartra, *Agrarian Structure and Political Power in Mexico*, op. cit., p. 188.

<sup>64</sup>*Catequistas* are lay preachers that in the case of Chiapas, and other states with a high percentage of marginalization, have combined religious and socio-political education based on Liberation Theology which emphasizes the empowerment of marginalized groups of society to radically change both their material and spiritual bases. Their ideas of social justice are based on an articulation of Marxism and Catholic doctrines. Such articulation has always been adversely taken by the local dominant groups, the federal authorities and the traditional hierarchies of the Roman Catholic Church. For details regarding their specific roles in Chiapas, see J. Charlene Floyd, “A Theology of Insurrection? Religion and Politics in Mexico,” op. cit., pp. 154-160; Gary MacEoin, *The People’s Church: Bishop Samuel Ruiz of Mexico and Why He Matters*, US: Crossroads Pub. Co., 1996. For an excellent history of the Theology of Liberation see: Philip Berryman, *Liberation Theology: The Essential Facts about the Revolutionary Movement in Latin America and Beyond*, NY: Pantheon Books, 1987.

as the “defender of the Indian.” The government decided to ask the help of the Diocese of San Cristobal in organizing the event. The Diocese responded positively to the government’s request. The congress gathered delegates from 1,000 communities, representing 400,000 people, and provided an important venue whereby the indigenous peoples of Chiapas, as well as those from other states, addressed issues such as economic exploitation, the need for land, the destruction of their culture, human right abuses and the lack of democracy. Ironically, these were issues that the government had tried to avoid from the beginning of the setting of the agenda.<sup>65</sup> The congress also presented the opportunity for independent organizations to reinforce their regional networks, particularly in the Central Highlands and the Lacandón Forest.<sup>66</sup> However, it was not until the 1980s that the radicalization of these movements would lead to higher levels of repression and social violence.

It is worth mentioning that, although approximately 68 percent of the population in Chiapas is Catholic, it has the highest percentage of Evangelical Protestants compared to other states. Approximately 17 percent of the population in the state is Evangelical, and most of this population is concentrated in northern Chiapas where most Choles and Chamulas reside.<sup>67</sup> These Evangelicals have been attacked as foreigners to this Catholic-dominated

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<sup>65</sup>For details regarding the 1974 Indigenous Congress see: J. Charlene Flyod, “A Theology of Insurrection? Religion and Politics in Mexico,” *op. cit.*, pp. 159-160; and Thomas Benjamin, *A Rich Land, A Poor People*, *op. cit.*, pp. 235-36.

<sup>66</sup>For an excellent account of the independent movements and their geographical locations, see Neil Harvey, “Peasant Strategies and Corporatism in Chiapas,” in *Popular Movements and Political Change in Mexico*, Joe Foweraker and Ann L. Craig (eds), Boulder/London UK: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1990, pp. 183-199. For a historical perspective, see Benjamin, *op. cit.*, Epilogue.

<sup>67</sup>Carlos Martinez Garcia, “Las iglesias y la paz en Chiapas,” in *La Jornada*, Domingo 14 de Septiembre de 1997, internet version, <<http://serpiente.dgsca.unam.mx/jornada/mgarcia.html>>

state. The role of several these denominations have been questioned, especially because they maintain strong ties with their American counterparts who also operate in Guatemala. Their main agenda appears to be to rapid “de-culturalize” the indigenous peoples and usher their swift integration into a modernization process *à l’Americaine*. Although some of these allegations have been substantiated, others are obviously politically motivated. These have naturally ignited inter-ethnic tensions that have produced extremely violent conflicts and expulsions. After the 1994 Zapatista upheaval, both the federal and local governments took occasion to reduce the conflict as an inter-ethnic conflict among poor communities.<sup>68</sup>

Although it has not been fully proven, it is possible that some paramilitary groups that operate in the state are linked to these evangelical denominations. Similarly, these groups have been used by caciques who perceive the widespread support of the Liberation Theology as a direct threat to their interests.<sup>69</sup> One reason for the latter is that, not only have the

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<sup>68</sup>Regarding the history of such conflicts and their social impacts see: Dra. Dolores Aramoni (cord.), *Las expulsiones en los Altos Chiapas: San Juan Chamula, una comunidad quebrantada*, San Cristobal de las Casas, Chiapas: Instituto de Estudios Indígenas, Universidad Autónoma de Chiapas, UNACH, 1998. For the reduction of the conflict, the Secretary of the Interior declared after the Acteal Massacre on December 20, 1997 that “it is unfortunate, however, it is a war of poor against poor,” *La Jornada*, January 5, 1998. On the other hand, on January 16, 1998, he also declared before Congress that, “regarding the massacre, the motive was apparently [inter-ethnic] vengeance,” see *Excelsior*, January 17, 1998 (Translations are mine). After the investigations continued they found out that several government officials from the state of Chiapas as well as the army apparently were involved in such massacre in which 45 indigenous people were brutally murdered by Tzotziles linked to the PRI cacique from the municipality of Chenalhó. The governor of the State of Chiapas was removed from office in January, as well as the Secretary of the Interior, E. Chuayfett. Moreover, on April 3, 1998, a retired general of the Mexican Army, Gen. Julio César Santiago Pérez, was detained in Tuxtla Gutiérrez. See *Excelsior*, April 3, 1998, Front Page.

<sup>69</sup>For the inter-religious tensions and their appropriation by the *cacique* system, see Gaspar, Morquecho, “Las políticas indigenistas en la formación de los cacicazgos en los Altos de Chiapas,” in *Quehacer*, Num. 4, Febrero 1998, San Cristóbal de la Casas, Chiapas, Mexico: Instituto de Estudios Indígenas, Universidad Autónoma de Chiapas (UNACH).



catequistas empowered indigenous groups and peasants, but also because the Human Rights Center, Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas (CDHFBC), which operates from the Diocese of San Cristóbal, has been very active in reporting and denouncing human right abuses in the state, which have systematically implicated several government officials as well as members of the *guardias blancas*.

In Chiapas, as well as in most regions where high levels of social and economic marginality have persisted, class, ethnicity and religion have to be taken, in a dialectical analysis, as determining factors that can ignite violent conflict but also appease it. As we shall see, these factors, which are interrelated to conditions of scarcity, extreme exploitation and a complete lack of democracy, were exacerbated by the 1982 debt crisis and its neoliberal response that led to the 1994 Zapatista rebellion.

#### *Economic liberalization, social and political polarization and rebellion*

The year 1982 marked the moment when independent indigenous and peasants' organizations began to strengthen their political networks and become more active in demanding land rights, social justice and democracy. From this time onwards the already very weak levels of consensus and legitimacy of the PRI and its corporate system began to erode at a much more accelerated pace. Moreover, it also marked the beginning of the deterioration of the economic and political institutions that delivered at least a minimum of political and social stability. Of course, as Chiapas' history had proven, the principles and practices of the

Mexican Revolution barely touched those who needed them most.

The 1980s also saw Mexico being pulled into the Central American crisis. Chiapas became the center of Mexico's national security concerns and was militarized at levels that have not stopped increasing. The country saw its worse economic crisis since the 1930s, and Chiapas was be caught in the middle of the crossfire between a federal state trying to resolve a foreign conflict that could spillover into its Southern states, and a local government led by General Abasalón Castellanos Domínguez (1982-1988), who continued to reinforce internal repression against those who dared stand against the "familia chiapaneca" or the caciques.<sup>70</sup>

Mexico's agricultural sector, which was already de-capitalized before the 1982 debt crisis, was hit the hardest. As credits shrunk, corruption worsened and, those who were not part of the PRI corporate system were further denied the scarce resources. On the other hand, those who were linked to the PRI were able to obtain fertilizers, tools and capital. The rest survived on subsistence production, leased their land to cattle grazers or their labor to *finqueros* or *caciques*. To attract foreign investment and protect the capital intensive agricultural sector, the De la Madrid regime slowed down the distribution of land and issued

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<sup>70</sup>General Castellanos was the Commander of the 31st military zone at the time of the army massacre of Indians at Golonchán in 1980. Under his rule (1982-1988), the reports of human right violations and political assassinations increased dramatically (at least 600 peasant and indigenous leaders were killed in rural violence promoted by caciques linked to the governor who himself came from a cacique family!). For an excellent report on the increase in human right violations during the De la Madrid regime and Gen. A. Castellanos' see: Miguel Concha Malo, "Las violaciones a los derechos humanos individuales en México (período: 1971-1986), in Pablo González Casanova & Jorge Cadena Roa (eds.), *Primer Informe sobre la Democracia en México*, 1988, Mexico: Siglo XXI, 1988. Also see Benjamin, *A Rich Land, A Poor People*, op.cit., pp.246-247, and Neil Harvey, "Peasant Strategies and Corporatism in Chiapas," op. cit.

thousands of Certificates of Nonaffectability.<sup>71</sup> With these certificates, 70 percent of the land for cattle grazing was protected.<sup>72</sup> These measures not only deepened the *supply-induced*, *demand-induced* and *structural* scarcities referred to by Howard and Homer-Dixon (1995), but also polarized the society to levels of extreme tensions: marches, protests and land takeovers increased as never before in Chiapas' history.<sup>73</sup>

Moreover, this polarization confronted two national projects that could not, in a context dominated by structural scarcities and a complete lack of democracy and accountability, sustain social stability and peace. Class and ethnic lines were clearly drawn, and the struggle for land became increasingly violent. A cycle of land "invasions" followed by violent expulsions gave Chiapas, as Benjamin states, "the dubious honor of being the second most violent state in the country (Veracruz being the first)."<sup>74</sup> In spite of this, Governor Castellanos proudly declared in an interview that "in this state, there were no problems" and that, "peasants are always an easy prey for sly ones."<sup>75</sup> Some of the more radical independent organizations that were formed in the 1970s had created underground

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<sup>71</sup>These certificates were meant to protect the land from further distribution and benefit that landowners producing cash crops or cattle. It is important to note that during the De la Madrid regime there were 9,072 certificates of non-affectability issued compared to 106 during the Lopez Portillo regime (1976-82) or 51 during Echeverria' regime (1970-76). See Neil Harvey, "Peasant Strategies and Corporatism in Chiapas," op. cit., p. 191.

<sup>72</sup>Neil Harvey, "Rural Reforms, Campesino Radicalism, and the Limits of Salinismo," op.cit., p.22

<sup>73</sup>For a detailed account of the number of marches, protests and land takeovers, see Carlos Heredia and Mary Purcell, *The Polarization of Mexican Society*, Mexico: Equipo Pueblo, 1994.

<sup>74</sup>Benjamin, *A Rich Land, A Poor People*, op. cit., p. 249.

<sup>75</sup>Interview with Armando Sepúlveda, *Excelsior*, January 14, 1983.

structures that would end up consolidating movements such as the National Zapatista Liberation Army, or Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (EZLN). It is no coincidence that in several interviews, Sub-comandante Marcos has declared that the EZLN was born in 1983 as a response to the neoliberal policies of the De la Madrid regime and the extremely repressive measures of General A. Castellanos.<sup>76</sup> The conjunction between a political economy that was setting the grounds for the extinction of the indigenous peoples, and the use of brutal force by the state's regime was supported all along by President De la Madrid under the excuse of national security concerns.<sup>77</sup> This continued even if systematic and detailed reports from the CDHFBC or organizations such as Amnesty International were released.

Independent organizations such as the very powerful Emiliano Zapata Peasant Organization or Organización Campesina Emiliano Zapata (OCEZ), formed in 1982, and the Independent Peasant Alliance, Emiliano Zapata (ANCIEZ) apparently linked directly to OCEZ, formed the social and political bases for the EZLN and the Indigenous Clandestine Revolutionary Committee, or Comité Clandestino Revolucionario Indígena (CCRI). These

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<sup>76</sup>For a compilation of direct interviews, see Yvon LeBot and Maurice Najman, *El subcomandante Marcos, El Sueño Zapatista: Entrevistas con el Subcomandante Marcos, el Mayor Moises y el comandante Tacho del EZLN*, (Traducción de Arí Cazés), Mexico: Plaza & Janes, 1997. See also, *Zapatistas!: Documents of the New Mexican Revolution*, New York: Autonomedia, 1994, and John Ross, *Rebellion from the Roots: Indian Uprising in Chiapas*, Monroe Main: Common Courage, 1995.

<sup>77</sup>For details regarding pressures on the Mexican government see: Amnesty International, *Mexico: Human Rights in Rural Areas: Exchange of Documents with the Mexican Government on Human Rights Violations in Oaxaca and Chiapas*, London: Amnesty International, 1986. For other reports and accounts see: Miguel Concha Malo, "Las violaciones a los derechos humanos en México (período 1971-1986)," op. cit., fn 63.

organizations received strong support from the Cordinadora Nacional Plan de Ayala (CNPA), the Frente Nacional Democrático Popular (FNDP), the Unión de Uniones-Asociación Rural de Interés Colectivo (UU-Aric), and the Central Independiente de Obreros Agrícolas y Campesinas (CIOAC).<sup>78</sup> Most of these organizations were formed in the 1980s and were an important instrument for maintaining the alliance between agricultural workers, poor peasants, independent *ejidos* and indigenous groups. These have been the ideological and political instruments that have helped empower the marginalized in Chiapas to struggle on all different fronts. However, it is important to note that it is only the EZLN-CCRI that has assumed the role of a guerilla movement.

However, the straw that broke the camel's back was the dismantling of Article 27 of the Constitution that, because of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), has destroyed any real possibilities for the peasants or the indigenous groups to recapture their land. The Salinas regime had started to implement the neoliberal policies at full thrust, whatever the social consequences. Although it had set up the National Solidarity Program or PRONASOL, it was only a political instrument that the local caciques controlled (see Chapter IV). By dismantling the legal structures that have kept alive the hopes of the poorer peasants and the indigenous groups, the EZLN found itself with no other alternative than to come out of its ten-year hiding and confront what it considered as an illegitimate regime.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>78</sup>For an excellent historical review of these groups, see Benjamin, *A Rich Land, A Poor People*, op. cit., pp. 235-255.

<sup>79</sup>It is important to remember that Salinas took power through a very dubious process. His regime was not considered as legitimate by several political actors including the third largest party, the PRD, of which presidential candidate, Cuauthémoc Cardenas, had apparently won under the banner

In Chiapas, as in most of Southern Mexico, the deeply rooted structures of political oppression and economic exploitation finally became unbearable when a regime, with a very low level of national consensus and a questioned legitimacy, abruptly dismantled the last political and legal resources for those who have been historically marginalized. The technocrats and economic elites, in total control of the state's apparatuses, fully embraced, with less autonomy and economic resources, a regional hegemonic project that would further pressure the persistent and already unsustainable environmental scarcities. On the other hand, the social and political impact of the neoliberal policies embraced by technocrats and the economic elites set the conditions for an increase in social grievances and violent conflict. All that was needed was the empowerment of the oppressed, and the EZLN became the most powerful tool for rebellion .

As we shall see in the next chapter, the military and political response to this crisis has shown a profound flaw between the present conceptualization and practices of national security. Therefore, before the present conjunction between the objective and subjective conditions for violent conflict spread to other regions, the concept and praxis of Mexico's national security must be redefined. This is all the more urgent because of the recent announcement that a new guerilla movement is now operating in several states with similar socioeconomic and political conditions as Chiapas, called the Popular Revolutionary Army or Ejército Popular Revolucionario (EPR),

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of the FDN.

## Chapter VI

### **The EZLN Uprising: Implications for Mexico's National Security**

*"You might question the path, but never the causes."*  
Subcomandante Marcos, January 1, 1994.

*"No more a Mexico without Us."*  
Comandante Ramona, December 3, 1995.

#### *Introduction*

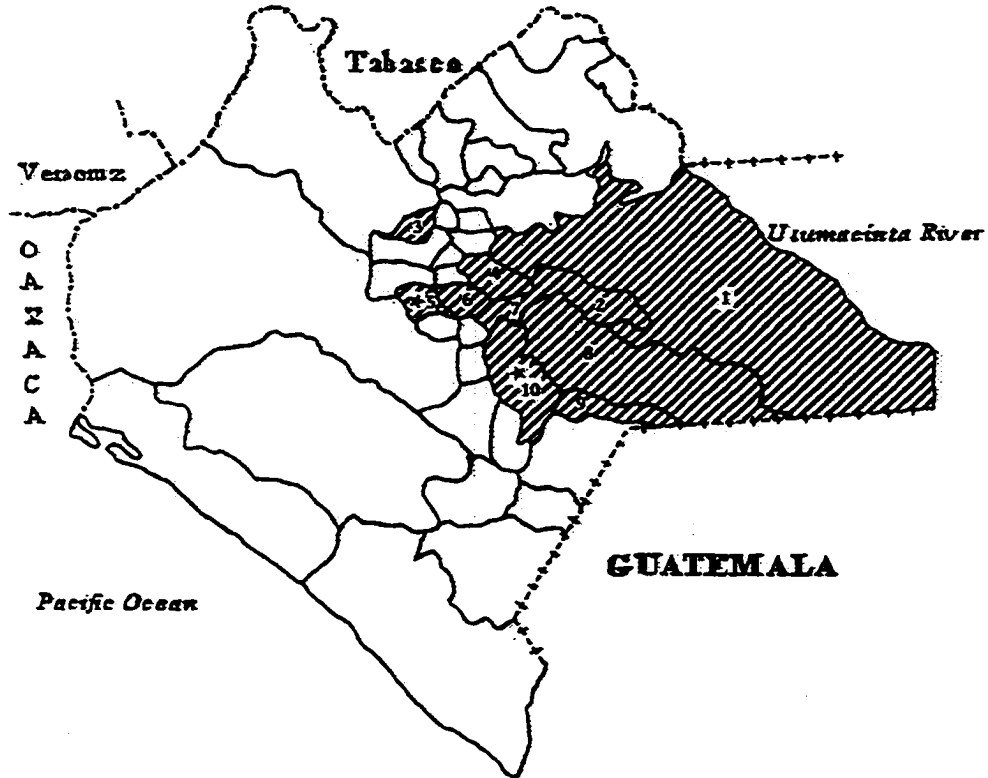
This chapter examines the nature of the Zapatista rebellion, the different politico-military responses to it, its political and social impact on Mexico's political system and its implications with regard to Mexico's national security principles, policies and practices. It focuses on the major events of the rebellion and its influence on the potential transformation of the Mexican state. In this regard, this chapter seeks to demonstrate the link between Mexico's political and national security crises and the demands articulated by indigenous peoples for higher levels of political autonomy. It also attempts to identify the objective threats to Mexico's national security, and thus provide a more coherent notion of Mexico's future national security doctrines and practices.

On January 1, 1994, the day that NAFTA came into effect, the EZLN launched an offensive to demand social justice and put an end to years of veiled dictatorship and socio-political repression. The EZLN had taken, with no military or police resistance (both forces

were in their barracks celebrating the new year) the second largest city in Chiapas, San Cristóbal de las Casas, as well as Ocosingo, Chanal, Altamirano and Las Margaritas and nine other municipalities (see Map 1.VI).



**Map 1.VI. Area of Rebellion**



Seiva:  
1. Ocosingo

Altos:  
2. Altamirano  
3. Larráinzar  
4. Oxchuc  
5. San Cristóbal de las Casas  
6. Huistán  
7. Chanal

fronteriza:  
8. Las Margaritas  
9. La Independencia  
10. Comitán

★ Regional seat

Source: Juan González Esponda & Elizabeth Pólito Barrios, "Notas para comprender el origen de la rebelión Zapatista, in Neus Espresate (ed.), *Chiapas (Vol.1)*, Mexico: Instituto de Investigaciones Económicas, UNAM & Editorial Era, 1995, p.118.

In so doing, the EZLN crossed the line from “passive war”<sup>1</sup> to direct confrontation with the Mexican Federal Army.

This first offensive lasted only two weeks and ended on January 12 when President Salinas de Gortari declared a unilateral cease-fire. Although the Mexican military denied that they were caught off guard,<sup>2</sup> the political elite was surprised by both the magnitude of the upheaval and the unprecedented support for the EZLN by political parties, civil society and several international actors. Carlos Montemayor, a noted specialist in Mexico’s guerrilla movements, categorized the EZLN uprising as part of the ‘third generation’ of guerrilla movements in Mexico. He based his observation on several factors: 1) the socialist discourse has been replaced by a nationalist and reformist one; 2) the causes for social oppression are not only identified as being part of a class struggle but also of race; 3) their tactics include a strong and open support from a broad spectrum of interest groups at both a domestic and international level and to rely on a diverse set of communication tools including the internet

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<sup>1</sup>The term “passive war” (in Gramscian terms) is mentioned in the political work carried out by organizations such as the Alianza Nacional Campesina Independiente Emiliano Zapata (ANCIEZ).

<sup>2</sup>It is important to note that the Mexican Army had confirmed the presence of guerrilla forces in 1993. The first Zapatista military camp was discovered on May 22, 1993 by a military platoon ‘combing’ the area of the Sierra Corralchén. After that first skirmish, the Mexican Secretariat of Defense (SND) decided, with the knowledge of the US Secretary of Defense and the CIA, to annihilate the movement in order that NAFTA’s approval would not be derailed. This campaign was done under the pretext of the ‘war against illegal drug trafficking.’ Intelligence documents note that the military did not know that the EZLN would begin its hostilities on January 1st. For details regarding Mexico’s intelligence department (CISEN), see Carlos Tello Diaz, *La rebelión de las cañadas*, Mexico: Cal y Arena, 1995. For an analytical history of the movement, see Carlos Montemayor, *Chiapas: la rebelión indígena de México*, Mexico: Joaquín Mortiz, 1997, and Carlos Fazio, *El tercer vínculo: de la teoría del caos a la teoría de la militarización* (prólogo de Lorenzo Meyer), Mexico: Joaquín Mortiz, 1997. Raúl Benítez Manaut, a specialist on Mexico’s national security, stated in an interview that there were those in CISEN who believed that the only way to annihilate the guerrillas was to know their numbers and military potential. To do this, the EZLN needed to be convinced to come out of the jungle. Interview with Benitez, Mexico, December 1996.

and finally; their strategic goals are no longer to destroy the state.<sup>3</sup>

As this chapter will illustrate, the most important achievement of the EZLN has been to bring the regime to a negotiating table not just to conclude a peace agreement but also, and more importantly in its view, to push for a reform of the state.

*January 1, 1994: The end of the myth of social peace*

The Salinas regime appeared to provide the nation-state firm bases for social peace and justice. For the technocratic bloc, neoliberalism was seen as the final solution to Mexico's economic, political and social problems. However, the EZLN's lengthy *Declaration of the Lacandon Jungle* obviously rejected this approach (see Appendix 1.VI). According to them, those who were marginalized had "enough of the seventy-year-old dictatorship, led by a small inner clique of traitors who represent ultra-conservative groups ready to sell *our* country,"<sup>4</sup> which they perceived as a direct threat to both *the nation* and their survival as a *unique* and *integral* part of the nation-state.

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<sup>3</sup>Although guerilla movements had existed in Mexico since 1965, they were fundamentally based on either a Maoist or a Marxist-Leninist ideology. The EZLN, and to a certain extent the EPR, seems to depart from this model. While it is still committed to Marxism, it does not advocate the destruction of the state. It would appear that a new political discourse is emerging from these movements. For excellent summaries regarding the history of the guerrilla movements in Mexico until the present, see Carlos Montemayor, "México y la guerrilla," in *La Jornada*, August 30, 1996; —. "La guerrilla en México," in *Proceso*, No. 1076, June 15, 1997;—. "La guerrilla hoy," in *Proceso*, No. 1078, June 28, 1997.

<sup>4</sup>General Command of the EZLN, *Declaration of the Lacandon Jungle: Today We Say Enough!* (translated by Frank Bardacke, Leslie López, and the Watsonville, California, Human Rights Committee) reprinted in *Shadows of Tender Fury: The Letters and Communiqués of Subcomandante Marcos and the Zapatista Army of National Liberation*, New York: Monthly Review Press, 1995, p. 52. Emphasis is mine.

The EZLN was not able to attain the goals it aimed for, as expressed in its *Declaration of the Lacandon Jungle*, in that short offensive, e.g., the “march to the capital,” the “defeat of the Mexican Army,” and the toppling down of the “illegitimate head of state, Carlos Salinas de Gortari,” but Mexico is still reeling from the social and political effects that the offensive brought forth. As this thesis demonstrates, it has put to question the serious social consequences of Salinas’ neoliberal policies, at both the domestic and international levels.

Despite the fact that the government was ‘caught off-guard,’ it was able to increase its military presence from 2,000 troops on the day of the offensive to 14,000 in two weeks and 40,000 at present.<sup>5</sup> The EZLN, with its roughly 2,500 combatants, was swiftly ‘contained,’ but apparently, the set of social and political demands which it presented have garnered the support of a large majority of Mexicans and most indigenous groups across the country and the continent.<sup>6</sup> These demands were the following:

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<sup>5</sup>See Stephen J. Wager and Donald E. Shultz, *The Awakening: The Zapatista Revolt and its Implications for Civil-Military Relations and the Future of Mexico*, Carlisle Barracks, PA: US Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, 1994, p. 11. For the new numbers, see Guillermo Correa, “El ejército libra “su guerra”, sin aparente control civil: 40,000 soldados rodean comunidades Zapatistas,” in *Proceso*, February 15, 1998, no. 1111.

<sup>6</sup>Although it is difficult to measure the support for the EZLN, the guerilla group and its charismatic leader, Marcos, have been supported openly by the PRD, which won in a landslide victory in 1997 and controls the capital (18 million inhabitants), the Grupo Barzón (a 1.2 million debtors group formed in 1994 after the peso crisis), the independent unions of Mexico which have more than 1 million active members, most student organizations and professor unions across the nation and most indigenous peoples grouped around the Congreso Nacional Indígena or National Indigenous Congress (CNI) which represents all Indian Nations in Mexico. One indication of the widespread support is that the EZLN was able to organize, in conjunction with the Alianza Cívica Nacional and La Convención Nacional Democrática (the two largest NGOs that have played a major role in the democratization process of Mexico since the 1980s) the Consulta Nacional e Internacional (National and International Consultation) held on July-September 1995. Over one million Mexicans voted and 100,000 foreigners from 50 countries participated in the Consulta, with 98% of the voters supporting the EZLN’s

(1) **Economic demands:** Everything regarding the grave material conditions of life which we, the indigenous people of Chiapas, suffer. The current situation, and the road to immediate and long-term solutions.

(2) **Social demands:** Everything regarding what we, the indigenous peoples of Chiapas, suffer: racism, marginalization, lack of respect, expulsion from our land, attacks against our culture and traditions, etc. The current situation and the road to a definitive solution.

(3) **Political demands:** Everything regarding the lack of legal space for real participation by us, the indigenous people of Chiapas and all Mexicans, in national political life. The current situation and the road to immediate solution.

(4) **The end to all hostilities and violent confrontation. Guarantees for both sides in the conflict.**<sup>7</sup>

These demands were the bases for the subsequent negotiations after the unilateral cease-fire, and have set the stage for a very complicated process of negotiations that have involved national and international actors. "*Jobs, land, housing, food and health as well as independence, democracy, freedom, justice and peace*"<sup>8</sup> may seem very simple demands; however, they touch upon the most urgent needs for the majority of Mexicans. Moreover, as the EZLN has stated in several of its communiqués, the problem is not in acknowledging these needs, but in recognizing the structural and historical causes for the chronic persistence of such problems. The EZLN, steered by a very charismatic leader, and a small but very

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demands. It also organized the following: on January 3-10, 1996, the National Indigenous Forum was held in San Cristobal de las Casas with 500 representatives from over 30 indigenous groups attending; in April 4-8, 1996, the First Continental Encounter for Humanity and Against Neoliberalism was held with the participation of the major indigenous peoples of the Americas; in July 27, 1996, an international congress called the First Intercontinental Encounter for Humanity and Against Neoliberalism was also organized with a very important presence of intellectuals and public figures from around the world. Moreover, the marches in the capital to support the EZLN have attracted at least 120,000 people. (See Appendix 2.VI).

<sup>7</sup>Communiqué of CCRI-CG, EZLN, January 20, 1994, "Conditions and Agenda of Dialogue," in John Ross (ed.), *Shadows of Tender Fury*, op. cit., p. 89.

<sup>8</sup>See *First Declaration of the Lacandon Jungle*, ibid., p. 54.

effective army composed of the most marginalized of all Mexicans, was willing to sit, and speak for *all* Mexicans, which political parties in a crippled democracy have not done for centuries. This was a battle between a small and local rebel group with a national outlook and a regime that would do everything to keep the conflict local and small.

*The government response: The EZLN as a threat to Mexico's national security*

There was no doubt that for the Federal Army, the uprising was real, and the “200 or so rebels” had to be dealt with swiftly.<sup>9</sup> For most civilians, however, stupor and incredulity pervaded the environment. Questions were raised, such as: How could a small group of poor Indians rise in arms? How could such poor Indians arm themselves? How could a ‘group of illiterate peoples’ articulate such a discourse? For the Presidency, the business community, and their class intellectuals, the rebels were only a handful of radical leftists, “left-overs” from the guerrilla movements of the 1970s, who connived with a bunch of Central American guerrilla fighters and drug traffickers to commit “illegal acts” that threatened the political stability and social peace of a nation that, much to the ‘dislike of the left,’ was finally

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<sup>9</sup>Mr. Setzer, who was Chiapas’ governor at the time of the conflict had indicated that the state’s intelligence department had pegged the number of “transgressors” to not more than 200. On the other hand, an internal memo from the Secretary of Defence had stated that this “small force” would be contained and eliminated on January 10, 1994. On January 7, 1994, the Secretariat of Defence stated in a press release that there were actually 400 transgressors. A week later, the Undersecretary of the Interior, Socorro Díaz, released a study of 28 pages (done in only seven days!) that described a very well organized rebel group with at least 1,000 members. See *Proceso*, No. 897, January 10, 1994, pp.17-21. (Translations are mine.)

'modern.'<sup>10</sup>

What was even more surprising for most Mexicans was the slow response from a Presidency that prided itself for having a strong grip on Mexico's political situation. After three days of deploying the army in a 'chase' against what the Secretariat of Defense called the "transgressors," President Salinas finally appeared on the national networks. He called on "the violent group" to stop "their violent and illegal conduct." He also intimated that indigenous peoples were forced by this violent group to commit "acts of violence against their own will" and that they [the violent group] wanted to "hurt the name of Mexico, that with so much effort and work has been constructed (sic)."<sup>11</sup> The day before the president's appearance on national TV, an undersecretary of the Secretariat of the Interior had stated that such "violent groups" or "transgressors" were just "a mix of nationals and foreigners similar to other factions in Central America."<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>Although the Presidency had not responded immediately after the January 1st offensive, the Secretariat of the Interior, the Secretariat of the Defense and the Secretariat for External Affairs asserted in several press releases that the EZLN was a "bunch of transgressors" who were committing "illegal acts". The nature of such "illegal acts" was never specified and the "violent group" was seen as a collusion of national and foreign "transgressors." Some of the more influential intellectuals of that time immediately alluded to the EZLN as "drug traffickers," "petit-bourgeois radicals," a bunch of manipulators from Central America and Mexico's urban elites, and radical priests, and even as a group of "delirious and lunatic radicals." For the government releases see: *Proceso*, *ibid.* For the more critical articles, see Raúl Trejo Delarbre, "¿Quienes, por que?" *El Día*, January 4, 1994; Jaime Labastida (brother of the Secretary for the Interior) "Una guerrilla sorda," *Excélsior*, January 8, 1994; Jaime Sánchez Susarrey, "Los misterios de Chiapas," *Reforma*, January 8, 1994; Raúl Trejo Delarbre, "¿Qué ha pasado?" *Unomásuno*, January 9, 1994; Hector Aguilar Camín, "La explosión en Chiapas," *Proceso*, January 10, 1994; Castillo Peraza, "Oficio de tinieblas," *Etcétera*, January 13, 1994; José Woldenberg, "La guerra de Chiapas," *Etcétera*, January 13, 1994. Several of these articles that appeared in the national press are now compiled in Raúl Trejo Delarbre (comp.) *Chiapas: La guerra de los medios*, Mexico: Editorial Diana, 1994.

<sup>11</sup>*Proceso*, Num. 897, January 10, 1994.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*

The regime's response was clear: the EZLN was an external enemy that was out to jeopardize the security of the nation. Moreover, because the EZLN lacked legitimacy, it was left to the Secretariat of the Defense, the federal and the state polices to deal with such "illegal acts." The President need not respond immediately to the demands of a "bunch of transgressors" who, to begin with, were demanding that he step down from office. What this meant was that the conflict would be dealt with by a controversial combination of counterinsurgency measures, violent police operations, and massive expulsions of foreigners, the latter being consistent with a chauvinist discourse on national security .

However, the response of a much more empowered civil society was surprisingly prompt. Through marches and press releases, NGOs and nonpartisan individuals urged the government to stop the bombing of the rebel positions. They also demanded that human right abuses by the military, state and federal forces be immediately monitored.

At the time of the uprising, the state of Chiapas, particularly the city of San Cristóbal de las Casas, was packed with tourists and representatives of national and international human rights organizations. That the *bon élève* of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, and a new 'privileged' member of NAFTA and the OECD, had a rebellion on its hands was "hot news": the day of the seizure of San Cristóbal and other cities by the EZLN, European and Latin American correspondents were sending images to their agencies of poorly armed indigenous peoples led by *Subcomandante Marcos*, who did not waste any time before giving interviews to the national and foreign press.<sup>13</sup> The speed with which the news

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<sup>13</sup>Four days later, *Le Monde* and the Italian newspaper *L'Unità* had already interviewed Marcos. Representatives from the European Parliament as well as other international NGOs flew to Chiapas in haste to see for themselves what happened in Chiapas. *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9.



was dispatched around the globe was only matched by how quickly (that is, within a week from the date of the uprising) the Zapatista internet infrastructure was set up and made fully operational.<sup>14</sup>

After two weeks of continuous bombing of enemy positions and openly violating human rights, President Salinas finally succumbed to domestic and international pressures to halt the military operations. On January 12, 1994, he declared a unilateral cease-fire that was honored promptly by the EZLN. It was envisioned that, after the Federal Army had taken control of the cities seized by the EZLN and an assessment was conducted regarding their numbers, military power and civilian support, negotiations would commence, backed by a strong military presence.

*The first dialogue: From “transgressors” to a legitimate organization of “unsatisfied Mexicans”*

On January 10, 1994, Manuel Camacho Solís, former mayor of Mexico City, was appointed as the official government representative for the peace negotiations. The EZLN recognized him on January 18, and on February 21, 1994, the first direct contacts with the federal government were established, with the Bishop of San Cristóbal de las Casas, Samuel Ruiz, acting as the official intermediary. The negotiations were held in the Cathedral, where it was expected that there would be a strong military presence. What was unexpected, however, was the presence of thousands of civilians that came from all over the country to

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<sup>14</sup>It is interesting to note that during the first skirmish in May 22-24 in Coralchén, the EZLN camp, which was dismantled by the Federal Army, used computers to establish what was later called the Zapatista’s “internet war”. See *Proceso*, March 30, 1993.

form, together with the National Red Cross, a “peace cordon” that they hoped would protect the belligerent forces throughout the negotiating process.

Although the regime’s goal was to swiftly sign a peace accord and then deal at the local level with the EZLN’s socioeconomic and political demands, the EZLN immediately took the initiative to present an agenda with a national reach. The negotiations ended on March 2, 1994 with a document containing a set of statements and proposals, and a commitment to find solutions to the socioeconomic problems of Chiapas. Some progress was attained in some areas, particularly with regard to the socioeconomic concerns of the indigenous peoples at a national level, but the thorniest points which were not resolved pertained to land tenure issues and to specific levels of political autonomy for *all* the indigenous peoples of the nation.

As a first step toward a national reform of the state with regard to land tenure, the government had six months within which to carry out a new agrarian census in the state of Chiapas to eliminate illegal *latifundia* that still exist. However, it did not accept, under any circumstances, the opening up of a new debate regarding Article 27 of the Constitution, nor did it allow a review of NAFTA’s agricultural sections.<sup>15</sup>

Despite the fact that the Salinas regime was unwilling to reopen such debates, the peace talks provided the opportunity for both parties to work towards a peace accord and to discuss reforms with regard to indigenous cultural and political autonomy. However, the already delicate political climate collapsed with the assassination on March 28 of PRI

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<sup>15</sup>For details see copy of accord in: Secretaria de Gobernación, *Compromisos por una Paz Digna en Chiapas, San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas, a 2 de marzo de 1994*, Mexico: SG, 1995.

candidate Luis Donaldo Colosio. The EZLN, to protect itself from being blamed as the perpetrator of the assassination, condemned it immediately,<sup>16</sup> and suspended further negotiations as well as internal consultations following the March 2 accords.

The PRI promptly put up a new candidate, Ernesto Zedillo, but the system had started to crumble. The PRI was swept with internal conflicts, producing tensions that eventually pushed the government representative, Manuel Camacho, to resign on June 16, 1994.<sup>17</sup> . Camacho publicly accused the new candidate Zedillo of sabotaging the negotiations. A new peace envoy, Jorge Madrazo, was appointed on June 23 and was initially accepted by the EZLN. However, after consultation with its support bases regarding the accords, the EZLN decided that the renewal of negotiations would be accepted only on condition that the government would agree to the continuation of land reforms and the retention of communal lands under Article 27 of the Constitution, and that the coming elections in Chiapas were to be suspended. Regarding the latter, the EZLN was of the view that existing social and political conditions within Chiapas would not guarantee that a truly democratic electoral process would take place.

Meanwhile, the EZLN took steps to reinforce civil society's support for its cause. It called for a National Democratic Convention (NDC) under the rubric of the *Second Declaration of the Lacandon Jungle* (see Appendix 2.VI.) to discuss reforms to Mexico's Constitution. The Convention was held in San Cristóbal de las Casas and Guadalupe

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<sup>16</sup>See *Communiqué from the CCRI-CG of the EZLN*, Mexico, March 24, 1994 condemning Colosio's assassination,

<sup>17</sup>See *Excelsior*, June 16, 1994, p. 1.

Tepeyac, or 'the first of five Aguascalientes.'<sup>18</sup> It had more than 7,000 participants from across the country, with more than 100 international observers coming from 42 countries.

The most important concerns and statements that were presented and discussed in the Convention were:

- The country cannot expect long-lasting peace if the indigenous peoples continued to be treated as second class citizens;
- The *cacique* system and its private armies must disappear from the socio-political map of Mexico;
- Land reform cannot be aborted for the sake of a dubious capitalization process;
- The democratization of the country can no longer be held hostage by the economic reforms imposed by an illegitimate regime;
- The more than 40 million poverty-stricken Mexicans can no longer be subject to an economic policy that has pushed them to violent conflict;
- Neoliberalism, at a domestic and international level, must be denounced as a political and economic project that seriously undermines the sovereignty of the Less Developed Countries and threatens the security of individuals and the environment;
- The Constitution has to be reformed to guarantee political and cultural rights for indigenous peoples as stated in Convention 169 of the ILO which has been signed and ratified by Mexico;
- The EZLN, as a legitimate group formed by Mexican citizens, did not in any way, threaten the security of the nation;
- The army has to retreat to its bases; and
- The country's social, political and economic problems have to be resolved by political means.<sup>19</sup>

The Convention acknowledged that the path to peace and social justice was through non-violent means, but at the same time, it also recognized that the EZLN and their demands

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<sup>18</sup>It was in the city of Aguascalientes, in the state of Aguascalientes, where constitutional deliberations first took place which eventually found its way to the 1917 Mexican Constitution. The Zapatistas named their encounters related to talks for the reform of the state as 'Aguascalientes I, II, III, IV, V'. Unfortunately, there never went beyond the 'Aguascalientes I'. For details regarding the logistics and agenda of the conference and its national impact, see *La Jornada*, August 5-10, 1994.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

could not be considered as alien to the rest of the nation-state. The NDC put tremendous pressures on a regime that was seeing its internal consensus disintegrate and its legitimacy put in doubt. Questions were raised, such as: How could the government justify the strong presence of the military? Why would the state elections proceed even though the socio-political conditions were not suited for such a process? Why did the 'hunt' for EZLN supporters not stop despite a unilateral cease-fire that was fully honored by the EZLN? However, Salinas was not willing to sacrifice what he, and the economic elite that supported him, considered to be the only path to 'modernization.' Ernesto Zedillo, on the other hand, displayed no political sensitivity at all, and capitalized on the murder of Luis Donaldo Colosio to sow a climate of fear and instability.

Zedillo won the federal elections with the lowest support for any PRI candidate (49.7%). However, on December 1, 1994, when he assumed the presidency, Zedillo had announced that it was now the time to "redistribute the wealth generated by a strong economy" based on neoliberalism.<sup>20</sup> However, the structural problems concealed by the Salinas' regime would show their real face: on December 20-22 the peso collapsed, losing more than 50% of its value and depleting the country's international reserves to unsustainable levels. Zedillo blamed the EZLN's "second offensive" for the collapse, and refused to recognize that acute structural problems such as the unsustainable deficit of approximately US \$ 30 billion, and a complete lack of accountability within the Mexican bureaucracy, were

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<sup>20</sup>See Chapter IV, as well as President Zedillo's opening speech to Congress of December 1, 1994.

the causes of the economic catastrophe.<sup>21</sup>

For Marcos, the presidency of Zedillo was “the beginning of a nightmare.”<sup>22</sup> The Zedillo administration began applying a “carrot and the stick” policy against the EZLN. As this chapter demonstrates, this policy did not produce positive results for a peace accord, but has actually threatened the national security of the nation.

*Zedillo's paradox: From dialogue and acceptance to military confrontation and open annihilation*

When Zedillo took office, he agreed to continue the negotiations with the EZLN, who therefore, was no longer an obscure “violent group” or a “bunch of transgressors,” but a legitimate social and political actor that, although armed, had to be treated as such. However, Zedillo, who from the first day of his presidency has been criticized as lacking determination and leadership, has swung from a policy of dialogue to an all-out support for a Low Intensity Conflict (LIC) strategy and tactics to effect peace.

If there is one distinctive characteristic of Zedillo's administration with regard to the Chiapas issue and its national security implications, it is its endless ambiguity. This ambiguity, although has been part of a tactical policy to create tensions with the EZLN and between the

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<sup>21</sup>On December 23, 1994, the Secretary of Finance declared that the “second offensive” of the EZLN launched four days earlier, had dwindled international reserves, pressuring the peso to devaluate. The truth is that the EZLN had broken the military cord that was occupying zones declared as demilitarized areas on February 1, 1994. For the Secretary's declaration, see *Excelsior*, December 23, 1994. For the structural causes and the policy mistakes see: World Bank, *Causes and Effects of the Mexican Peso Crisis*, of. cit. Fn 90, Chapter IV.

<sup>22</sup>See communiqué of the EZLN, Mexico, January 4, 1994, “Bienvenida la pesadilla,” in *La Jornada*, Enero 4, 1994.

former's social bases, has also been interpreted as a sign of weakness within the presidency and chaos within the political system.<sup>23</sup> There is another perspective, however, which does not deny chaos and institutional weakness as important factors for political instability, but goes further in explaining the causes for such a careless and in many ways shortsighted policy towards the EZLN. This perspective looks at the Zedillo policy as part of a broader political economic and military project that former US Secretary of Defense, William Perry, has called the "third link." The "third link" promotes the consolidation of the US-Mexico military relations to "strengthen" North American economic and political ties, based on free trade and democracy *à l'américaine* (e.g., an alternating bipartisan system, which in the Mexican context, refers to the PAN and the PRI).<sup>24</sup> This 'link' is actually part of an even broader project to redefine, at a continental level, the role of the Latin American armies. Under this project, the military structures of Latin America would no longer be focused on confronting an external enemy but on 'protecting' the future continental free market and its democratic processes, and on waging the 'war on drugs.'

The reshaping of the Latin American military, including that of Mexico, is an integral part of the *Cheney Doctrine*, the operational aspects of which were discussed at the continental level, during the Meeting for the Ministers of Defense of the Americas in Williamsburg on June 25-26, 1995. The meeting was a follow-up of the Summit of the

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<sup>23</sup>Perhaps the most compelling work regarding the theory of chaos and institutional weakness in Mexico is Oppenheimer's book, *Mexico: Bordering on Chaos*, op. cit.

<sup>24</sup>The 'third link' policy was announced by then Secretary of Defense William Perry on October 23, 1995. As quoted in Carlos Fazio, *El tercer vínculo: de la teoría del caos a la teoría de la militarización*, Mexico: Joaquín Mortiz, 1997, p. 186. The original quote appeared in the newspapers *Excelsior* and *Los Angeles Times* on October 24, 1995.

Americas held in Miami in December 1994, and was meant to focus on the 'technical problems' encountered in the 'war on drugs'. However, it also discussed several politico-military proposals based on those first presented by former Secretary of Defense Cheney (1989-93) for the further unification of Latin American armies under a restructured Inter-American Defense Board (IADB) in which the US would assume the military lead regarding continental matters. This controversial move would finally concretize the principles embodied in the Monroe Doctrine.

Although Mexico only participated as an observer in that meeting, the Zedillo regime took very seriously the need to develop stronger links with the US military and to sustain Mexico's national security by "promoting international positions in accordance with the most important world issues: financial stability, free trade, migration, democracy, human rights, illegal drug trafficking, terrorism and the protection of the environment".<sup>25</sup> The regime openly embraced, as part of its national security, the promotion of free trade and democracy. However, the country's dependency on the US market meant that the cost of such policy would be more dependency and less political, economic, and military independence.

On the 'promotion' of democracy, it was understood that within the frame of *democracy with security*, the military would play a more active role in 'managing' and 'securing' the democratic process. In this regard, the President, who is also the Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces, has directed the military to consider any opposing forces as the

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<sup>25</sup>Presidencia de la República, "La defensa de la Soberanía al fin del siglo XX," in *Plan Nacional de Desarrollo (1995-2000)*, Mexico, 1995.



“worst obstacle for [Mexico’s] national progress.”<sup>26</sup> Moreover, by equating public insecurity or any illegal act as a threat to the nation, the regime has justified the militarization of society, but more importantly, has legitimized the use of force to solve the Chiapas problem or any other social strife that might occur, as it already has, in several states. Therefore, if the Executive considers that the EZLN is provoking a state of public insecurity because its members carry weapons or because some of its acts are considered illegal, this implies then that they can automatically be regarded as threats to the security of the nation and therefore be prosecuted either as external enemies or as simple bandits. In articulating the so-called “third link,” the regime has created a very complex scenario in which the EZLN is considered in some instances as a group of bandits that have to be brought to court, and in other cases, as enemies of the nation that have to be dealt with by a military supported by the US’s counterinsurgency experience. Paradoxically, they also have been called a “legitimate group of unsatisfied Mexican citizens.”<sup>27</sup>

The very vague and unspecified notions of national security presented by the Zedillo regime have created a lot of confusion and suspicion not only among the EZLN’s members, but also among the opposition groups whose practices may be considered arbitrarily by the government as against the Constitution. One of the serious problems with such a general

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<sup>26</sup>Ernesto Zedillo Ponce de León, *Avances y retos de la Nación: Tercer Informe de Gobierno*, p. 4.

<sup>27</sup>Stated by president Salina’s second national press conference regarding the January 1 upheaval. Quoted in several newspapers, including *La Jornada* and *Excélsior* on January 17, 1994, a day after the President send to Congress his initiative for a Law for Peace and Dialogue. This quotation was later used in the preamble of the March 11, 1995, *Law for Dialogue, Reconciliation, and a Just Peace*.

conception of national security is that the military loses its essential role, which is to protect the integrity of the territory, and becomes involved in very murky tasks that cannot be sustained either in law or by the facts. On the other hand, the military, under orders to 'secure democracy' and fight against drug cartels, has been caught in a spiral of dependency with the US. Some political analysts in Mexico believe that the latter represents a more serious threat to Mexico's national security, particularly should the Zedillo regime decide to take one step further and agree to the idea of an Inter-American Defense Board with unclear 'supranational' powers and sustained militarily by the US.<sup>28</sup> Indeed, the regime has moved swiftly towards the consolidation of such "third link." In less than two years, more than 3,000 Mexican officers, which is an unprecedented number in the history of Mexico's military relations with the US, have been trained in the US (more than any other Latin American state in previous years),<sup>29</sup> and the army has brought an unprecedented amount of military equipment from the US, including equipment specifically designed for counterinsurgency operations.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup>For serious critics of this tendency see: Carlos Fazio, op. cit., Luis González Souza, *Soberanía herida: México-Estados Unidos en la hora de la globalización* (vol.2), Mexico: Editorial Nuestro Tiempo, 1994; Carlos Montemayor, "El ejército y la injerencia internacional," in *Proceso*, No. 1084, 10 de agosto de 1997; —. "Globalización militar," in *Proceso*, No. 1074, 1 de junio de 1997; Rolando Cordera, Luis Garfias, Carlos Montemayor y Monica Serrano, "El Ejército Hoy," in *Nexos*, Abril 1997. See also Chapter I, V pp. 55- 63 and footnotes 96 and 97.

<sup>29</sup>See Pascal Beltrán del Rio, "En sólo dos años, unos 3,000 militares mexicanos habrán sido entrenados en 17 instalaciones castrenses de EU," in *Proceso*, No. 1122, 3 de mayo de 1998.

<sup>30</sup>The list of purchases include, among other items, the following: over 7,000 bulletproof US Hummer armored troop transport vehicles, 78 helicopters, 78 fixed wing planes, 1,615 machine guns, 3,300 flame throwers, 360,000 grenades, 266 electrical prods for torture practices, 1,500 other vehicles, 1,000 parachutes, and thousands of field equipment such as combat radios, night vision equipment, computers, etc. For the full, list, see *La Jornada*, August 21, 1995. For details regarding counterinsurgency training and the purchase of military equipment from other countries such as

*The new doctrine of national security: 'Flexing the military's muscles'*

On December 8, 1994, the EZLN, which had earlier demanded that the Chiapas elections be suspended, called off the 11-month old cease-fire. It considered the elections to be fraudulent, and the assumption into office of Robledo Rincón as governor of Chiapas to be an imposition from the central government. A week later, the EZLN launched a new, "nonviolent" military offensive in Chiapas with the help of the civilian population. Overnight, over half of Chiapas was transformed into "rebel territory" without a single shot being fired. This action clearly showed that the EZLN had a strong social base. It proceeded to form 38 new "autonomous municipalities." Predictably, these actions were considered by the state as illegal acts that threatened both the public and the nation.

Faced by the possibility of a new confrontation between the federal army and the EZLN, Bishop Samuel Ruiz went on a highly publicized hunger strike. The government, buckling down to demand from civil society for a peaceful solution to the conflict, decided to continue with the dialogue and recognize the National Intermediation Commission (CONAI) led by Bishop Ruiz. In response, the EZLN recalled its armed forces from several of the territories under its control and declared on January 16, a "unilateral and indefinite cease-fire."

As soon as the situation seemed under control, at least in the military sense, Zedillo suddenly appeared on February 9, 1995 on national television to announce arrest warrants against the "top Zapatista leadership," unilaterally breaking the cease-fire. Subsequently, the

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Switzerland, see Carlos Fazio, *op. cit.*, pp. 180-81.

government launched a vast military offensive, code-named “Operation Rainbow,” against the EZLN and their communities of support, both inside and outside of Chiapas. The EZLN was forced to retreat into the jungle, together with thousands of ITS support bases. However, it refused to return fire against the federal army and the state police who were part of the operation.

Apparently the Centre for National Security (CISEN) had planned to dismantle the whole Zapatista leadership in less than a week. The operation was perceived to end any peaceful solution to the conflict. The Secretariat of the Interior denied that the operation was an act of war but, instead, was done to “restore the state of law and the sovereignty of the Constitution.”<sup>31</sup> The massive deployment of the military did achieve one goal, and this was to erode the EZLN’s community base. Frustrated by their failure to capture the leadership of the EZLN, the military began to destroy houses, torturing those who they considered EZLN supporters and forcing more than 20,000 indigenous people to seek refuge in the jungle.<sup>32</sup> The action was so reckless and unpopular that former Undersecretary for External Relations and Ambassador to the UN Victor Flores Olea, called the operation as a serious political mistake and an exercise of stupidity on the part of President Zedillo.<sup>33</sup> This was perhaps the strongest reaction ever from a government functionary of such high standing.

The military’s actions exacerbated the internal divisions within the ‘revolutionary

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<sup>31</sup>General Ramón Arrieta’s reaction to the press on February 10, 1995. For the full coverage of the operation see *La Jornada*, February 19, 1995.

<sup>32</sup>See *La Jornada* from March 9 to March 11.

<sup>33</sup>Quoted in Carlos Fazio, *op. cit.*, p. 83.

family,' but if President Zedillo was trying to show an image of strength to a domestic and international press that had always characterized him as weak puppet of the 'old guard' or *dinosaurs*, his conduct actually proved, as Mexican writer Carlos Fuentes stated, that "Zedillo looked more weak, and risked appearing as a prisoner of the army, the national hawks groups, the international sharks and the American government".<sup>34</sup>

It should be pointed out that the military was implementing the infrastructure for a LIC based on the "Iruegas-del Valle doctrine"<sup>35</sup> which had the following strategy:

- to militarily destroy the EZLN as a rebel force and oblige it to become a legal political organization;
- to push the rebels to combat the army; if they wanted to negotiate as such, they had to prove their military capabilities, or surrender;
- to corner the EZLN on the Guatemalan border which is completely militarized and of whose army has cooperated with its Mexican counterpart;<sup>36</sup>
- To negotiate only in accordance with the EZLN's real military power and not on the power of their political discourse or social support;
- To keep the conflict and its subsequent negotiations as a local, and at the most, a regional problem;
- To contain and reduce, within the traditional ways of any LIC, the social bases of support for the EZLN;
- To promote negotiations in tandem with the military's campaign to dismantle the EZLN's social bases of support;
- To tightly cordon off the autonomous municipalities;

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<sup>34</sup>Ibid., pp. 83-84.

<sup>35</sup>Gustavo Iruegas, who was named by Zedillo as the new peace envoy on December 25, 1994, was a very experienced Ambassador in national security issues. He was a key broker during the Central American crisis and helped consolidate the peace accords in El Salvador and in Guatemala. The "doctrina Iruegas" was coined by political analyst Jaime Aviles. Del Valle followed Iruega as peace envoy who followed and reinforced Ambassador Iruega's counterinsurgency plan. Ibid., pp. 96-103.

<sup>36</sup>It has now been publicly known that the counterinsurgency forces from Guatemala, also called *Kaibiles*, trained the Mexican paramilitary organizations in Chiapas and cooperated in intelligence operations with the Mexican army. See *La Jornada*, November 15, 1997. Senator Félix Salgado M. (PRD) had actually demanded the creation of a special Senate commission to investigate such an unprecedented situation. See *Excelsior*, November, 1997.

- To harass the social bases and provoke the EZLN by an escalation of military exercises such as constant helicopter and plane flights over towns and large scale military incursions;
- To divide the EZLN's social bases by:
  1. arming and training the guardias blancas or paramilitary groups that have promoted inter-ethnic and religious conflict;<sup>37</sup>
  3. sending the army in communities where the Zapatista support might be considered low and offer medical or other social services;
  4. publicly emphasizing that the leadership of the EZLN is alien to its indigenous bases;
  5. allocating large sums of funds for communities that are located in the outskirts of the autonomous municipalities;
  6. Presenting the members professing liberation theology as alien to the indigenous community and the nation-state.
  7. accusing community leaders of engaging in illegal acts against the state or their communities, and arresting, torturing and eliminating them;
  8. expelling all international observers who appear to support the EZLN or their social bases, or who might question the human rights record of the federal army.<sup>38</sup>

The main tactical actions of these LIC strategies are delineated in the *Plan de Campaña Chiapas 94*,<sup>39</sup> which run counter to the regime's discourse for peace and stability. It puts to question the regime's pronouncement that it truly wants peace and stability in Chiapas and the rest of southern Mexico. As paradoxical as it may seem, the facts show that the regime has taken the position to create instability, and therefore, eliminate the "indigenous problem" through a massive deployment of military power. It seems that the policy has been

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<sup>37</sup>There are at least six paramilitary groups connected to the cacique/PRI local structures. These are: Paz y Justicia, Chinchulines, Máscara Roja; Movimiento Indígena Revolucionario Antizapatista (MIRA), Unnamed groups also operate training camps in Los Altos, Alianza San Bartolomé de los Llanos,. See Jesús Ramírez Cuevas, "Chiapas: mapa de la contrainsurgencia," in *La Jornada's* supplement, *Masiosare*, November 23, 1997.

<sup>38</sup>Carlos Fazio, *op. cit.*, pp. 48-49; 80-88; 100-103; 194-93.

<sup>39</sup>Parts of the military campaign for Chiapas are quoted in Carlos Marin, "Plan del ejército en Chiapas desde 1994," in *Proceso*, No. 1105, January 4, 1998.

to dismantle these indigenous communities and literally ignore the whereabouts of more than 16,000 displaced members.<sup>40</sup> Those who decide to return to their villages find their homes occupied by family members from municipalities controlled by the PRI, or are relocated in refugee camps called *albergues* which have an uncanny resemblance to the so-called “strategic hamlets” of Vietnam or the “model villages” in Guatemala.<sup>41</sup>

Perhaps the most paradoxical situation is that the government has carried out more than 50 expulsions of international observers under the excuse that they have been directly involved in political activities that threaten the national security of Mexico,<sup>42</sup> but has also sought, with the approval of the Executive, the involvement of foreign military personnel from the US, Guatemala, Argentina and Israel in military operations.<sup>43</sup> However, it was only after a former US officer in Vietnam, Brian Wilson, published the most detailed and comprehensive report on the US military intervention in Chiapas and other areas of conflict in Mexico that the issue was finally raised in Congress by members of the PRD.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>40</sup>Although the government has not acknowledged any official number regarding internal refugees, one of the most important independent human rights organizations in Chiapas, the Comisión de Derechos Humanos San Bartolomé de las Casas (CDHSBC), has counted at least 16,000 internal refugees. This number has been confirmed by the Mexican Academy for the Promotion of Human Rights and is presently being assessed by the ACNUR. See *La Jornada*, June 22 and 23, 1998.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid. See also Carlos Fazio, *op. cit.*, pp. 93-94.

<sup>42</sup>*La Jornada*, suplemento *Masiosare*, April 26, 1998.

<sup>43</sup>See: John Saxe Fernández, “Crisis General: El Terror de Estado,” *Excélsior*, January 2, 1998; Jim Cason & David Brooks, “Capacita la CIA en inteligencia a 90 jefes del Ejército Mexicano,” *La Jornada*, February 2, 1998; Gilberto Lopez R. “La Injerencia extranjera en Chiapas,” *La Jornada*, March 12, 1998; and Carlos Fazio, *op. cit.*

<sup>44</sup>The issue of external forces in Chiapas was first raised in the Senate on November 15, 1997 (see footnote 35). However, after Wilson’s report, the opposition in the Mexican Congress demanded a full investigation of what appeared to be the most direct evidence of intervention of US forces with

Strict guidelines exist which restrict military support from the US and other countries to the “war on drugs,” but it has been widely reported that most equipment, training, and *in situ* supervision, are being used for counterinsurgency operations in Chiapas and in the state of Guerrero.<sup>45</sup> Col. Warren Hall, Staff Judge Advocate to Gen. Barry McCaffrey, admitted in an internal memo:

It is unrealistic to expect the military to limit the use of the equipment to operations against narcotraffickers. . . The light infantry skills US Special Operations forces teach during counter drug deployments. . . can be used by armed forces in the counterinsurgency as well. Moreover, such equipment may be used in counterinsurgency operations during which human rights violations might occur.<sup>46</sup>

The Zedillo regime has embraced a military logic that has obviously been detrimental to a constructive dialogue with the EZLN. Declarations by the Secretary of the Interior that “force would not be used for the case of Chiapas,”<sup>47</sup> have produced a lot of confusion and frustration among all the actors directly or indirectly involved in the conflict. Since that declaration was made, the following acts of violence and repression have occurred:

- over 300 military incursions in villages and towns;
- more than 330 low flights by helicopters and planes;
- increase in the number of military and police camps and garrisons from 74 in

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the support of the Mexican Executive. For the reaction in the Mexican Congress, see *La Jornada*, June 25, 1998. For the report, see Brian Wilson, *The Slippery Rope: US Moves Into Mexico*, Santa Cruz, CA: The Bill Motto Veterans of Foreign Wars Post # 5888, 1997. The document, which is now being debated in the US Congress can also be accessed through the following internet address: <<http://nonviolence.org./slipperyrope/>>

<sup>45</sup>Brian Wilson, *The Slippery Rope*, of. cit.

<sup>46</sup>Quoted in Brian Wilson, *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>47</sup>After two secretaries of state for the interior were dismissed during the Zedillo regime for reasons related to their handling of the Chiapas conflict, the new secretary had declared on March 16, 1998 that “no force would be applied in Chiapas”, *La Jornada*, March 16, 1998.



- 1995 and 209 in December 1997 to 250 at present;
- increase in the number of troops from 37,000 in December and 5,000 in 1994 to 40-70,000;<sup>48</sup>
- dismantling of two out of 38 autonomous municipalities, leaving more than 20 dead, including women and children, and displacing thousands to the jungle;
- dismantling of 20 land lots reoccupied by the peasants and indigenous peoples;
- over 40 indigenous and peasant leaders murdered without legal investigations being pursued;
- serious injury inflicted on 25 young men, women and children by the Federal Army, the federal and state police and the paramilitary groups;
- prosecution and imprisonment of 45 people without arrest warrants (the arrests were based on political reasons); and
- death of 17 children, nine women and ten men in the government 'shelters' because of hunger, treatable diseases or psychological trauma.<sup>49</sup>

These atrocities, in addition to those accounted for since January 1, 1994 and after the Acteal massacre perpetrated by the *guardias blancas* on December 20, 1997 in which 45 people, including pregnant women children and infants were brutally murdered, paint a most gruesome scenario of one of the most barbarian chapters in Mexico's history since the Mexican Revolution, the guerrilla movements of the late 1960s and 1970s and the assassination of hundreds of workers and students in Mexico City on October 2, 1968.

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<sup>48</sup>Because of a lack of clear information from the Secretariat of Defense, it has been very difficult to precise the exact number of troops in the area.

<sup>49</sup>Report appeared and confirmed by the CDFBDC and the AMPDH in *La Jornada's* supplement *Masiosare*, April 26, 1998. Also see report by the OAS' Inter-American Human Rights Commission *Report on the Events in Chenalhó*, Washington: IAHC, February 1998.

*Negotiating under a militarized state of affairs*

Because of the increasing militarization of the state of Chiapas, the EZLN, encouraged by a very strong support from both domestic and international NGOs and from civil society in general, continued to push for a resumption of negotiations. On March 11, 1995, the Mexican Congress approved the *Law for Dialogue, Reconciliation, and a Just Peace in Chiapas*, thereby tacitly recognizing the failure of Operation Rainbow, and in effect acceding to constant pressure from Mexican civil society, and from the European Parliament that needed to vote positively on Mexico's human rights and democratization records in order that the negotiations for a comprehensive free trade agreement would continue.

The Law called for the re-initiation of peace talks, and the suspension of military operations against the EZLN, as well as a suspension of arrest warrants against its leadership. This Law also created a Legislative Commission, a Commission on Concordance and Pacification (COCOPA) in charge of facilitating and laying the bases for the new dialogue, as well as a Implementation and Verification Commission (COSEVER) of the negotiations. A week later, the EZLN accepted the Law as the basis for peace negotiations. The main objective of this Law is:

To establish the legal bases that can promote the dialogue and conciliation to reach, through an accord of concordance and pacification, a just, long-lasting and honorable solution to the armed conflict initiated on January 1, 1994 in the state of Chiapas.

For the effects of the present Law, the EZLN will be considered as a group of people which, identified as an organization of *Mexican citizens, composed by a majority of indigenous peoples*, that were dissatisfied by diverse causes, and therefore

got involved in the conflict referred to in the above paragraph.<sup>50</sup>

The EZLN had finally won official recognition and the legal protection to pursue, through the path of a dialogue, their political and social goals. What they had not been able to obtain was a demilitarization of the state as well as a stop to the human rights abuses by the Federal Army, the Federal and state police and the now more powerful paramilitary groups.

After several deliberations regarding the location for the dialogue (the EZLN wanted them to be held in Mexico City for they considered their struggle as a national one for all indigenous communities), both delegations agreed with the government's proposal to begin the dialogue in San Andrés Larráinzar, a town in Chiapas under the control of the EZLN.<sup>51</sup> This was consistent with the government's strategy, contrary to the EZLN's, of treating the conflict as a local problem, and to concede on the location of the talks would also show flexibility on their part. However, when the talks began, the EZLN's supporters came unarmed, and together with other NGOs formed a "peace cordon" to protect their delegation. Other indigenous groups, including armed Zapatista fighters, also descended to town to take part in the security cordon. The government vehemently opposed the presence of these Zapatistas, suspending the talks until the indigenous groups left the town. The more critical press labeled this as an act of arrogance and even of racism.

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<sup>50</sup>Mexico: *Diario Oficial de la Federación*, "Ley para el Diálogo, la Conciliación y la Paz Digna en Chiapas", México, D.F., a 10 de marzo de 1995. (Translation and emphasis are mine).

<sup>51</sup>See *La Jornada*, April 22, 1995.

Talks were resumed when the EZLN supporters withdrew to their communities. After a month of very tense dialogues, the government still refused to negotiate anything on a national level, and continued to insist that the EZLN's presence, influence, and demands had to be limited to four Chiapas municipalities. Frustrated by the government's stance, the rebels decided to convoke a massive national and international consultation, called the *Consulta Nacional e Internacional*.

The Consulta was carried out with the participation of 1.3 million Mexicans. Over 100,000 people from outside Mexico also participated in the consultation. Ninety-eight percent of the electorate expressed agreement with the principal demands of the EZLN; 93% agreed that all the democratic forces of the country should unite in a broad social and political opposition front in order to fight for those demands; 95% approved of a "profound political reform" in order to guarantee democracy; 93% agreed that women should be guaranteed equal representation and participation at all levels of civil and governmental responsibilities; and 53% suggested that the EZLN should convert itself into a new independent political force.<sup>52</sup> In addition to this spectacular dialogue between the EZLN and civil society, a poll conducted by the newspaper *Reforma* showed that 59% of Mexico City's population approved the EZLN's demands. This was a major victory for the EZLN in the sense that it broke the government's "minimalist" strategy to keep the conflict as local as possible, and therefore, concede as little as possible to the EZLN's demands. The government was cornered and therefore had to accept, for the time being, the EZLN's proposal regarding the rules and agenda of the dialogue. Also, although the negotiations were being held in San

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<sup>52</sup>For details see *La Jornada*, August 27, 1995. Also see fn 6.

Andrés Larainzar, Chiapas, the results were to be submitted by the COCOPA to the National Congress. After debate and approval, these accords would then be inserted into the Federal Constitution.

Part of the EZLN proposal was the constitution of the dialogue along six major themes: Indigenous Rights and Culture; Democracy and Justice; Welfare and Development; Reconciliation in Chiapas; Rights of Women in Chiapas; and finally, the Cessation of Hostilities. The first theme on Indigenous Rights and Culture was approved by both parties. The result of the talks was a 40-page document regarding indigenous cultural and political rights, signed by the COCOPA on February 16, 1996. This document was, however, reinterpreted and blocked by the Executive to force the EZLN to accept the government's original conditions, that is, no negotiations on a national level, and restriction of the EZLN to four municipalities. This desperate attitude from the Presidency has aggravated the division within the PRI and further prolonged the conflict. There is reason to doubt that the Zedillo administration has the political will to find a long-lasting solution to the problem; worse, its actions have heightened social tensions in regions with large numbers of indigenous communities. This posture must be understood as part of a war of attrition in which the government does not have strong support.

Despite this intransigent position, it is important to focus on the results of the San Andrés accords, which received the support of congressmen and women from the PRI, the PAN and the full support of the PRD. Such accords present a very specific understanding of the constitutional changes that are needed to redefine the nation's territorial and political sovereignty. If they are eventually passed in Congress and signed by the president, they will

have an unprecedented impact on the redefinition of Mexico's national security principles and practices.

*From a 'local conflict' to the redefinition of the nation-state and its security*

The conclusions of the San Andrés Accords with regard to Indigenous Rights and Culture underlie the creation on February 26, 1996 of the National Indigenous Congress. The main goal of this Congress is to obtain a comprehensive political and cultural autonomy for all the indigenous peoples of Mexico. It is a perspective that is supported by the National Indigenist Institute (INI)<sup>53</sup> and the COCOPA, but is regarded with great suspicion by the technocratic elites of the government. For the Zedillo regime, a fourth level of government based on ethnic considerations jeopardizes the security of the nation because it has the potential to divide the federation.<sup>54</sup>

This interpretation has been very much debated, particularly since the members of the National Congress who compose the COCOPA have approved the accords that recognize

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<sup>53</sup>During the negotiations regarding Indigenous Rights and Culture, the delegates of the INI acknowledged that a transcendental reform of the state had to consider and recognize higher levels of political and social autonomy for the indigenous peoples of the nation. This position, from an agency of the Executive, has caused profound divisions between the technocratic groups who would like to maintain the status quo and those who see the need for a political reform of the state. See *La Jornada*, November, 14, 1995.

<sup>54</sup>This has been the main barrier, as expressed in the regime's National Development Plan 1995-2000, to further talks beyond the San Andres accords. Although there is not a direct reference to a fourth level of government as a potential threat to the unity of the federation, the Executive has chosen to interpret the paragraph on the potential reforms of the state that might cause a new political division of the territory to mean that the proposed fourth level is a threat to the security of the nation. See *Programa Nacional de Desarrollo 1995-2000*, op. cit.

such a fourth level of government. This position was reaffirmed by the COCOPA in the Special Forum for the Reform of the State (Foro Especial para la Reforma del Estado) held on June 30-July 6, 1996 which brought in more than 1,300 intellectuals and social leaders from all over the nation.

The San Andrés Accords on Indigenous Rights and Culture were the most comprehensive package to be drawn which attempted to resolve at a politico-legal level the almost 500 years of oppression suffered by the indigenous peoples under a nation that was supposed to protect them. The main propositions of the accords are:

- The Mexican nation has a cultural plurality originally constituted by its indigenous peoples and their political, social, economic and cultural institutions which have been kept alive, regardless of their present legal status, before and since the consolidation of the Mexican state;
- The indigenous peoples have the right to their self-determination within the spheres of the political and legal autonomy granted by the accords;
- They have the right to have autonomy over the following matters:
  - to decide their internal forms of livelihood.
  - to decide their social, economic, political and cultural organization.
  - to apply their norms and regulations for the solution of internal conflicts, respecting the individual guarantees, human rights, and in particular, the dignity of women.
  - to have the state validate their legal procedures, decrees and decisions.
  - to elect their authorities and exercise their forms of government, guaranteeing the participation of women on a basis of equality.
  - to have full collective access, use and control over the natural resources of their territories and lands, except the land under the exclusive dominion of the nation.
  - to enrich and preserve their languages, and all the aspects that constitute their cultural identity .
  - to acquire, operate and administer their means of communication.
  - to promote the economic and legal conditions, in coordination with the federal and local governments, for bilingual education, sustainable and equitable development and effective policies against any form of discrimination.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>55</sup>See *La Jornada*, January 13, 1997.

The Executive reacted promptly. The President would not sign any new laws that would contest the fundamental premises of the political economy based on neoliberalism, or that would grant a fourth level of government to the indigenous peoples. The indigenous people could have autonomy regarding the application of their customs with respect to internal conflicts within their communities; however, issues regarding land tenure were non-negotiable if it meant that the Constitution would be tampered with. The indigenous peoples, therefore, would not be granted control and use of the natural resources on the territories of their ancestors. Changes in Article 27 of the Constitution ensured that land could no longer be classified as commonly-owned, except for the *ejidos* or plots on which the indigenous peoples were living at the time of the constitutional reforms. Moreover, the government rejected the re-municipalization of the state, which was proposed by the COCOPA to eliminate the large landownerships, or the cacique system. Hence, to give back the ancestral lands to the indigenous peoples was out of the question. The Executive refused to accept these proposals, which it considered as a threat for the 'progress' and 'unity' of the nation-state.<sup>56</sup> The Executive's rationale, however, fails to account for the following: How can the state be a rational and unitary actor if the nation, understood as a multilevel and complex entity that supports such rationality and unity, sees its historical social and political structures erode or collapse? How can the nation survive as a historical entity if the state, as its politico-legal frame, is detached from the history of the nation? And finally, how can the nation-state survive if the historical rights of 10 million of its original peoples are denied for the sake of

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<sup>56</sup>Ibid.



a very narrow and elitist notion of economic ‘progress’?

These were the key questions that the EZLN asked when it proposed the San Andrés Accords. Their goal, which was understood by the COCOPA (but not by an Executive supported by an economic elite bound to the neoliberal discourse of ‘progress’) was not to ‘balkanize’ the nation-state but to reinforce it as a result of the ‘globalization’ process controlled by transnational elites with no real national attachments. The San Andrés Accords were popular because they expressed the need for a national liberation at a conjuncture of extreme national vulnerability. The EZLN’s answers to these questions can be understood in the following statement by *Subcomandante Marcos*:

. . . What we are expounding is that in this stage of capitalist development, neoliberalism, there is a destruction of the national state. . . The concept of the nation/motherland is destroyed not only in the bourgeoisie but also in the governing classes. It would be very difficult to say that there are sectors in the government that are for the defense of a national project: they are killed or expelled. The neoliberal project demands an internationalization of history. It demands the erasure of national history. It also demands the erasure of cultural borders. The great cost for humanity is that for the financial capital there is nothing, no homeland or property. And, in all this game, the concept of the nation is erased. *A revolutionary process, therefore, has to begin by rescuing and securing the concept of nation and motherland.*

The principal mistake of neoliberalism is to think that it can go against history. And, when it interferes with the problem of the land, it [neoliberalism] pretends to ignore history and to act as if there were no history, culture, nothing at all. Nevertheless, when they [neoliberals] confront history, they create one of their enemies, maybe not the most powerful one, but for sure the most tenacious: Zapatismo . . . When neoliberalism, in search of its privatization, embarked on the question of land, it only provoked indigenous peasants to rise in arms.<sup>57</sup>

The key question for the EZLN, therefore, was not to seize state power but to act as a catalyst by calling upon the marginalized and the nationalist sectors of the country to

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<sup>57</sup>Interview with Carlos Fazio. See Carlos Fazio, *op. cit.*, pp. 133-134. (Translation and emphasis are mine).

“rescue and secure” the nation against what they perceived as an imminent destruction of the motherland. On the one hand the Zapatistas knew, despite their strategic goals as stated in their *First Declaration of the Lacandon Jungle* of January 1, 1994 that a military option would be impossible, and very unpopular. On the other hand, they also believed that the socioeconomic and political conditions for a truly democratic process in Mexico did not exist and hence, to become a political party and participate in elections would be to fall into a political trap. Indeed, the Zapatistas have declared in several documents that they would not participate in elections unless the Mexican Constitution was modified through a national convention participated in by all social forces and not just political parties. The main goal of this convention would be to change the key articles that grant extraordinary powers to the President. Likewise, the EZLN also knew that the indigenous peoples, as well as the majority of the peasants, were in such a state of marginalization that any democratic process becomes a mockery.<sup>58</sup>

To pursue and reinforce their political position that neoliberalism was the real threat to Mexico’s national security as well as humanity, the EZLN promoted and organized the *First Intercontinental Encounter for Humanity and Against Neoliberalism* in Oventic, Chiapas. The Encounter began on July 27, 1996 with nearly 5,000 participants from 42 countries, including the wife of the late French President François Mitterrand. had two very

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<sup>58</sup>Regarding the reasons that the EZLN cannot validate yet any democratic process, see Communiqué from the CCRI-CG of the EZLN, *Second Declaration of the Lacandon Jungle*, Mexico, June 1994, in John Ross & Frank Bardacke (eds.) *Shadows of Tender Fury*, op. cit., pp. 229-239; Communiqué from the Subcomandante Marcos, “Siete preguntas a quién corresponda,” January, 1997, in *La Jornada*, January 24, 1997; Communiqué from the CCRI-CG, July 1, 1997, in *La Jornada*, July 3, 1997, and Communiqué from the CCRI-CG, August 8, 1997, in *La Jornada*, August 11, 1997.

important objectives: 1) to contest through peaceful means the regime's doctrine of *containment-reduction*, and 2) to set the stage for continuing debate regarding the socioeconomic and political impacts of neoliberalism on all peoples of the world. The Encounter was organized into several workshops served as the forum for debate on the human, national and international security threats posed by neoliberalism at a global scale. The level of the debate was unprecedented for such a context, but most importantly, it gave the EZLN and Mexico's indigenous problems an international dimension.

The regime was literally enraged by such event and its immediate reaction was to limit its participation for the second stage of the San Andrés negotiations which focused on the theme of Democracy and Justice. The minimal participation of government representatives on the day of the plenary session was followed by their sudden decision to postpone the talks regarding these key issues. Simultaneously, military and paramilitary operations were intensified in the site of the Encounter. The venue was destroyed and several Zapatista towns were raided, their populations harassed and their belongings ransacked.

In the face of this pillage, the EZLN decided to suspend its participation in the San Andrés dialogue after consultation with its civilian bases. It presented five conditions that had to be met to get the EZLN back to the negotiating table:

- 1) release of all presumed Zapatista prisoners across the country, and the members of the EZLN's civilian base being held in the Cero Hueco prison in Chiapas;
- 2) institution of a government negotiating team with decision-making capacity, political will to negotiate, and respect for the Zapatista delegation;
- 3) installation of the Implementation and Verification Commission, and the immediate execution of the agreements already signed between the EZLN and the government on Indigenous Rights and Culture;
- 4) serious and concrete proposals on the part of the government for the

negotiations on Democracy and Justice, as well as a commitment to reach an accord on this topic; and

5) an end to the environment of military and police persecution and harassment against the indigenous communities of Chiapas as well as the eradication of the guardias blancas (or the promulgation of a law which officially recognizes them and provides them with uniforms so they do not operate with impunity).<sup>59</sup>

Unfortunately, not only have none of the five conditions been met; instead, military and police persecutions have worsened and human right violations have dramatically increased.<sup>60</sup> The regime did not back away from the *Iruegas-del Valle* doctrine; on the contrary, it has intensified its LIC strategies to very dangerous levels.

*From negotiations to increased politico-military coercion*

After the EZLN's unilateral suspension of the San Andrés dialogues, the regime plunged into an internal crisis. The Secretariat of the Interior, led by Emilio Chuayffet, reinforced its hard-line stance, in apparent opposition not only to other sectors of the state, particularly the COCOPA, but also to the President. Perhaps the most notorious deception took place was when the government and the EZLN gave the COCOPA the authority to draft the final document regarding the San Andrés Accords on Indigenous Rights and Culture.

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<sup>59</sup>See Communiqué from the CCRI-CG of the EZLN, August 12, 1996, in *La Jornada*, August 13, 1996.

<sup>60</sup>See the most detailed report on human right violations in Chiapas in the 300 pages *Informe final de la Comisión Civil Internacional de Observación por los Derechos Humanos (CCIODH)*, February 16-28, 1998. The International Civil Commission for the Observation of Human Rights is formed by 210 members from eleven countries. The full report can be accessed through the following internet address <<http://spin.com.mx/~floresu/fzln/archivo/cciodh/informe.html>>

Each side was to approve or disapprove the document with a simple “yes” or “no,” and further comments, corrections or reservations were not to be allowed. On November 29, 1996, the COCOPA presented the final package of constitutional reforms on Indigenous Rights and Culture to the EZLN delegation as well as to the Secretary of the Interior. While noting that the COCOPA document omitted many important points, the EZLN nevertheless accepted so that implementation of the Accords might begin, and therefore, a reinitiation of peace talks would take place. The government also signaled its acceptance of the document. However, the Secretary of the Interior backtracked on his original decision six days later. He met with the members of the COCOPA and informed them that he no longer supported their proposal. His decision unleashed the most profound crisis to date in the peace process.

On December 7, the COCOPA met with President Zedillo to request that he intervene and accept the document before the entire peace process fell apart. The President decided to temporarily stay the decision of the Secretariat of the Interior, and sent a letter to the EZLN requesting a 15-day period within which to examine the COCOPA document. The EZLN acceded to the Executive’s request. On December 19, the COCOPA received the President’s “response,” that was an entirely different counter-proposal (and not a simple “yes” or “no” which had previously been agreed upon). Zedillo not only rejected the COCOPA initiative, but also the San Andrés Accords in their entirety. The Executive had once more violated the *Law for Dialogue, Reconciliation, and a Just Peace in Chiapas*. However, what the events have really shown was President Zedillo’s lack of political will, and worse, his lack of control

over key Secretariats, particularly those in charge of internal security.<sup>61</sup> What has also become clear was that the strategy of containment and reduction of conflict would be accompanied by a corresponding diminution of the role of civilian national commissions such as that of the COCOPA. The problem with this strategy, beyond the damage it was causing to the peace accords, was that it reflected a dangerously short-sighted view of Mexico's new political map. The press, including Marcos, had warned the President that his lack of control over the Secretariats of the Interior and Defense would have dramatic consequences for the indigenous populations and ultimately the peace process.<sup>62</sup>

The military continued to disregard these warnings, however. On March 7, 1997, over 70 families living near Palenque, Chiapas, were brutally expelled from their homes by the state police. A week later, members of the public security forces, the judicial police, and the Mexican army attacked civilian Zapatistas in the community of San Pedro Nixtalucum, in northern Chiapas. Four unarmed Zapatistas were killed, and 29 were either beaten, detained, or just disappeared. The remaining Zapatista civilians from San Pedro, with more than 80 families, were expelled from their homes.<sup>63</sup> Despite these blatant violations of the *Law for*

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<sup>61</sup>In an article which appeared in *Proceso* on January 4, 1998, the former president of the COCOPA and member of PRI, Jaime Martínez Veloz, confirmed that the Secretary of the Interior exercised total control regarding the peace negotiations in Chiapas. This so-called "technical coup d'état" completely violated the Law for Dialogue, Reconciliation and a Just Peace in Chiapas. More importantly, it proved the fears regarding the very dangerous weakness of president Zedillo. See interview between Gerardo Albarrán de Alba and Jaime Martínez V. in *Proceso*, No. 1105, January 4, 1998. It is important to note that Martínez' remarks were never denied by the Presidency.

<sup>62</sup>See Luis Javier Garrido, "La Ceiba," *La Jornada*, October 5, 1996; Julio Moguel, "Chiapas: la geopolítica del miedo," *La Jornada*, March 11, 1997; Carlos Montemayor, "La movilización militar en Chiapas," *Proceso*, No. 1086, August 24, 1997.

<sup>63</sup>See *La Jornada*, March 7, 1997, and March 14, 1997.

*Dialogue, Reconciliation, and a Just Peace in Chiapas* as well as the Constitution, the Executive has, up to this writing, still denied that basic human rights have been, and are being, violated.

*The rise of politico-military repression*

On July 6, 1997 the federal mid-term elections were held throughout the country. The victory of the opposition parties from both the center-right and the center-left managed to take away the PRI's absolute majority in the Chamber of Deputies for the first time in nearly 70 years. In the indigenous communities of Mexico, meanwhile, elections were held in an atmosphere of increased tension and militarization. In Chiapas, vote abstentions were more than 80% in some municipalities.<sup>64</sup> President Zedillo downplayed the PRI's loss by stating that the victory of opposition parties in the July 6 elections legitimized the PRI and the Mexican political system, and that as a result "there is no longer room for radicalism operating outside the electoral sphere."<sup>65</sup> The message was that organizations such as the EZLN, the EPR or any other political forces that were not integrated in or transformed into political parties would not be considered as legitimate and therefore, in the eyes of the President, were illegal entities. Of course, in the case of the EZLN, which is still protected by a legal frame, the President's pronouncement was more difficult to fathom. However, for all the other "radical" or rebel groups, military or police prosecution, in the name of

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<sup>64</sup>See *La Jornada*, July 7-8, 1997 as well as *Excelsior*, July 8, 1997.

<sup>65</sup>See *Excelsior*, July 9, 1997.

democracy and national security, has continued unabated. In effect, President Zedillo had decided to support the hawks within his government, despite the PRI's significant loss of seats in the Chamber of Deputies, and the demand from a renewed COCOPA for the Executive to honor the San Andrés Accords and stop violations to the Law for Dialogue, Reconciliation and a Just Peace in Chiapas, as well as the Constitution.

On December 22, 1997, following months of threats and periodic violence against the civilian Zapatistas in the municipality of Chenalhó,<sup>66</sup> approximately 70 heavily armed members of a PRI-backed paramilitary group descended upon Acteal, a town which had been temporarily inhabited by hundreds of refugees from other communities in the municipality. The attackers launched a five-hour killing spree, murdering 45 people—mostly women and children who were trying to flee—and wounding 25 others. The massacre was witnessed by members of the public security police, who refused to intervene. Following the brutal attack, the military was placed on “maximum alert”, and additional troops were brought in from the states of Campeche and Yucatán to reinforce the army's presence in the municipalities of Ocosingo and Las Margaritas. The public disgust at such a flagrant act was expressed in all the national press and in the international press. The Secretary of the Interior and the Governor of Chiapas were finally dismissed.

The damage had already been done, but then, it was all part and parcel of the regime's

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<sup>66</sup>Earlier, on November 25, 1997, paramilitary groups burned down four houses in Acteal. The CDHFBC denounced the rape of several women by soldiers and the police. *La Jornada*, November 26, 1997. On November 27, the local deputies from the PRD, PAN and PT demanded that Acteal and other towns from the municipality of Chenalhó and northern Chiapas be protected. There was a clear lack of governance in the area, and a high probability that a massacre would occur. *La Jornada*, November 28, 1997.



LIC strategy. Contrary to the civil society's demands for peace, Zedillo decided instead to use the massacre to dismantle the EZLN's military power. On January 1, 1998, the President called for "a total disarmament of all armed groups in Chiapas," in violation again of the *Law for Dialogue, Reconciliation and a Just Peace in Chiapas*. A new military campaign was launched designed to disarm the EZLN under a very awkward use of the Ley de Armas de Fuego y Explosivos (Law for Fire Arms and Explosives).<sup>67</sup> Zapatista indigenous communities were occupied or placed under siege by the army. Although the new Secretary of the Interior, Francisco Labastida Ochoa and the new interim governor of Chiapas, Roberto Albores, stated that they were committed to continue the peace talks, the "carrot and stick" policy has continued.

As part of their continued efforts to contain and reduce the EZLN's politico-military power, the Executive began to accuse the National Commission for Intermediation (CONAI) led by Bishop Samuel Ruiz of being partial. On November 4, 1997 Bishop Ruiz was ambushed by a PRI-backed paramilitary group *Paz y Justicia*. Three catechists were wounded in the attack, which was roundly condemned by the Church, the CONAI, the COCOPA and the EZLN, but not by the government. The President, in an almost schizophrenic declaration, stated on January 23, 1998 that his government "has never utilized force in Chiapas," and that it was the EZLN who was seeking a violent confrontation. The EZLN did not even need to respond to this declaration, as PRD leaders, members of the COCOPA (including PRI deputies), the CONAI and most newspapers quickly pointed out

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<sup>67</sup>See *La Jornada* and *Excélsior*, January 1, 1998.

the fallacies in the president's declaration.<sup>68</sup>

The Secretary of the Interior announced subsequently that the government had dropped 23 of its original 27 objections to the COCOPA's proposal for the implementation of the San Andrés Accords. However, its remaining four "objections" were on items that the EZLN believed were key to a long-lasting solution of the nation's indigenous problems (i.e., the right for self-determination within the nation-state; a fourth level of government; control over their education and media, and the reform of article 27 granting their communities control over natural resources (except for strategic ones such as oil), and therefore, to a comprehensive understanding of the Mexico's national security. The EZLN has rejected the Secretary's offer, stating that it did not guarantee that they would be able to regain political and economic control over their ancestral territories.<sup>69</sup> The EZLN's response, through comandante Ezequiel, was blunt:

We will not accept a change to any word, comma, point or letter from the San Andrés Accords. It is all or nothing. In Chiapas we are very far from reaching peace with justice and dignity, for everyday there are more military troops that harass and repress our people, everyday there are more guard posts and everyday our leaders receive more death threats.<sup>70</sup>

After this declaration, the Secretary of the Interior tried, through a set of secret letters, to directly negotiate with Marcos. The subcomandante did not answer such letters,

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<sup>68</sup>See the following newspapers of January 24, 1998: *La Jornada*, *El Financiero*, *El Nacional*, *Reforma*, *El Norte*, and *El Sur*.

<sup>69</sup>Note that the EZLN stressed the notion of territory and not just land property.

<sup>70</sup>Quoted in Salvador Corro, "Guerra política y propagandística del gobierno para obligar al EZLN a reanudar las negociaciones," in *Proceso*, No. 1112, February 22, 1998. (Translation is mine)

and, in a communiqué to the International Civil Commission for the Observation of Human Rights (ICCOHR) on February 19, 1998, he declared:

As you would be able to confirm in the days to come, in the mountains of the Mexican southeast, the federal government will maintain its prosecution against the Zapatista leadership. Our present ‘strategy’ is to avoid that such prosecution be successful, therefore, it is impossible for us to have any direct encounter with you.<sup>71</sup>

After this declaration, Marcos decided, through a video which appeared in the offices of the newspaper *Tiempo* in San Cristóbal de las Casas on March 1, 1998, to answer the questions that ICCORH had sent to him.<sup>72</sup> The main points that he made regarding the possibility of a future dialogue were:

- If the five conditions are complied with, we would return to the dialogue, however, since we presented the five conditions in 1996, a set of new situations have appeared, and the conflict is even more serious;
- Unfortunately the government will not comply with any of the conditions, not one of them;
- The government is not contemplating that the dialogue be the path to resolve the conflict. There is no more trust in any dialogue. Therefore, it is once again up to civil society to give back the role that the dialogue deserves;
- We know that the Mexican government is determined to eliminate the EZLN, and in the worst of cases, is planning to annihilate the leadership and therefore negotiate with a headless body.

Regarding the massacre of Acteal, Marcos stated the following:

- For us, Acteal is the government’s message to the indigenous problem;
- Only through civil society’s pressure would the possibility that what happened in Acteal would not repeat itself, and the hope for the

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<sup>71</sup>Ibid. (Translation is mine)

<sup>72</sup>The contents of the video was reproduced by *La Jornada* on March 2, 1998. (Editing and translation are mine).

**indigenous peoples to recover what is theirs so that peace can be part of the indigenous peoples of Mexico, and for a better world be realized.**

**After this declaration, Marcos decided to hide and keep silent for several months until July 1998, when he sent a set of new communiques in which he calls for a new national consultation, organized by the civil society and the COCOPA, to put forward new bases for a long-term solution to the crisis.<sup>73</sup> However, a key mediating force has been eliminated: the CONAI and its president, Bishop Samuel Ruiz, were so discredited by the government that it was pushed to unilaterally dissolve on June 7, 1998. In its lengthy declaration, the CONAI demanded that the federal and state governments, “validate their will to resolve the conflict through facts, [and] renounce to their present war strategy.”<sup>74</sup>**

**Since these declarations, military and police repression have continued. Two autonomous municipalities have been destroyed, and several Zapatistas tortured and jailed. In the latest incident, 500 police and army troops raided on June 9, 1998 the municipality of El Bosque, an autonomous municipality led by Zapatista supporters, ostensibly to execute 15 orders of arrest. Fifty-seven Indian peasants were detained without arrest warrants. Of those detained, eight presumed Zapatistas (who were not in the arrest orders) were brutally tortured and killed. A state policeman was also killed during the raid, and a helicopter from the Federal Judiciary Police damaged.<sup>75</sup>**

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<sup>73</sup>See EZLN Communiques of July 1998 appeared in *La Jornada* on July 17 and 22, 1998.

<sup>74</sup>Declaration appeared in *La Jornada* on June 8, 1998.

<sup>75</sup>See *La Jornada*, June 11, 1998.

*The Chiapas conflict and Mexico's search for national security*

In Chiapas, the path toward a peaceful dialogue has been closed, at least for the time being. The reasons, unfortunately, go beyond the political will of both parties—assuming that such a will existed on the side of the regime. In his latest discourse, the President has viciously attacked the EZLN, the diocese of San Cristóbal de las Casas, the national and international NGOs dedicated to the protection of human rights, and all those who “reject law and democracy.”<sup>76</sup> He has openly challenged and threatened with punitive measures all paramilitary groups “of any genre.” He accused the EZLN of provoking the 1994 financial crisis and its socioeconomic consequences; the Diocese of San Cristóbal and its Bishop of promoting a “double discourse to encourage foreign intervention;” and the NGOs of being “foreigners directly intervening in the Chiapas conflict.”<sup>77</sup>

In the discourse of the present regime, the EZLN, the Diocese of San Cristóbal and any NGO that oversees the *universal rights* of individuals and peoples are considered external enemies and, therefore, a threat to Mexico's national security. As a consequence, the federal army, judicial and state police are literally absolved from the brutalities they may have committed to counter this “threat.” In other words, it is back to zero.

The discourse shows a very serious problem regarding the regime's notions and practices of national security. It has been widely condemned by all members of the opposition in the Chamber of Deputies, the local congresses and the governorships, including the PRI

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<sup>76</sup>See *La Jornada*, July 1, 1998. (Translation is mine)

<sup>77</sup>*Ibid.*

Senator for Chiapas, Pablo Salazar Mendiguchía.<sup>78</sup> It has been openly criticized by *every* national human right organization as well as the largest civil society organizations, and international NGOs such as the Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, and ICCORH, and the independent press, among many others.<sup>79</sup>

In terms of its political consequences, perhaps the strongest condemnation was made by US Congressman Bobby Rush (D), who was paying a visit (which was not criticized by the Zedillo administration as interventionist) to the latest village attacked by the army on the day the President was delivering his in Chiapas,<sup>80</sup> Rush said:

President Zedillo is darn wrong and I think that he should be very worried, as are all the people who love liberty and are concerned with regard to the atrocities that are being committed against the indigenous people in Chiapas. I am not intimidated by President Zedillo.<sup>81</sup>

With regard to the notions of what constitutes intervention, Representative Rush touched upon the key difference between the EZLN and the regime by stating the following:

Two years ago, a very dangerous debate took place in the US Congress with regard to a foreign intervention being carried out through the North American Free Trade Agreement, however, US corporations were being welcomed to Mexico. You cannot be protecting an economic intervention, but, when it comes to human rights, be against foreign intervention. What is good for one thing is good for everything.<sup>82</sup>

Rush asserted that foreign intervention for humanitarian reasons as not being

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<sup>78</sup>Ibid. See also Adolfo Gilly, "Zona de peligro", *La Jornada*, July 3, 1998.

<sup>79</sup>*La Jornada*, July 1, 1998.

<sup>80</sup>See fn 70.

<sup>81</sup>*La Jornada*, July 1, 1998. (Translation is mine.)

<sup>82</sup>Ibid. (Translation is mine.)

conducted under any circumstances by the US military or any other state force, except under the framework of UN peace and humanitarian relief efforts. He went on to state that he had witnessed the use of US military equipment, delivered for the exclusive use on the “war on drugs” in villages in Chiapas. He added that the UN should intervene because “those who are in power have not done enough to prevent the violence against the indigenous peoples.”<sup>83</sup>

Representative Rush was obviously not expelled from the country, unlike the more than 100 other international observers who never went on to deliver declarations along the level of those made by Rush. The day after, he was invited by the Secretariat of the Interior: his opinions were heard and would be responded to the next day by the Coordinator for the Peace Negotiations, Emilio Rabasa.<sup>84</sup>

The inconsistencies of policy and discourse that President Zedillo has proven since he took office in 1994 have shown that there is a serious confusion regarding the notion of what constitutes an external threat. Although the state, regardless of the party in power, has had to adapt to much higher levels of economic vulnerability (and which have had a dramatic impact on the marginalized and middle classes of the country), it has been steered by an economic and political elite that is not only aggravating such impact but making the state even more vulnerable. This problem becomes even more acute as the internal consensus of the regime has continued to erode, its popularity decline and human rights violations rise with impunity.

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<sup>83</sup>Ibid. (Translation is mine).

<sup>84</sup>See *La Jornada*, July 3, 1998.

The fact is that the state has lost its unitary and rational character since the collapse of the economy in 1982. It is acknowledged that the political economy implemented in 1982 has had some positive results regarding the management of macroeconomic factors, but the political and social spheres of the nation, particularly those which relate to human rights, have not improved, and in fact have even worsened.

The July 6, 1997 congressional elections have opened the possibilities for more democracy, but the Executive's monologue with regard to the opposition's concerns regarding the increasing vulnerability of the nation-state, the indigenous peoples demands, and armed groups such as the EZLN, EPR, and the newly formed Revolutionary Army of the Insurgent Peoples (ERPI) that together have a superior military capacity than that of the EZLN, is canceling out the possibility for badly-needed political and economic structural changes. Meanwhile, social and political violence has dangerously intensified in the states of Guerrero, Oaxaca, Michoacán, the State of Mexico, Puebla, Chihuahua, Tabasco and parts of Chiapas.<sup>85</sup> In particular, it is in Guerrero and Oaxaca where the EPR and ERPI have a very strong social base that the potential exists for an even more serious upheaval than the one in Chiapas.

It bears reiterating that the problem lies in identifying who the potential enemies of the nation-state are. By focusing only on macroeconomic problems, the 'technocratic bloc' has dangerously overlooked, or totally ignored, the profound structural problems that exist relative to Mexico's still very large rural sector, and the more specific ones pertaining to its

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<sup>85</sup>See *Proceso*, No. 1128, June 14, 1998 and *Proceso*, No. 1130, June 29, 1998. For an assessment regarding the EPR's military power, which has been accepted by the Executive, see: *Proceso*, No. 1057, February, 1997.



10 million indigenous peoples. In disregarding this sector for the sake of a very disputable notion of progress, the regime is faced with a critical dilemma: on one hand it is fracturing even deeper the post-revolutionary system that supports it, and on the other hand, it is forcing itself into a corner of a very unpopular military logic. The disturbing result of applying the military logic against its own people is that the human, social and political consequences are much worse than if the country were in a state of war. When the conflict is downplayed and the line is obscured between what constitutes a public security and a national security issue, the potential for human violations is much higher. The application of the Laws of War of the Geneva Convention becomes very complicated and humanitarian assistance efforts from international organizations like the International Red Cross becomes extremely difficult.

Through this discourse, the Executive has given the military and police forces carte blanche to systematically violate the Mexican Constitution, particularly those articles pertaining to individual guarantees. Moreover, the Executive has also violated Section II of Article 71 regarding the division of powers, Articles 39 and 40 regarding the sovereignty of the people, and Convention 169 of the ILO, signed and ratified by Mexico as well as expressed in the San Andrés Accords, which grants the right of indigenous peoples to self-determination within the state.<sup>86</sup> As Carlos Montemayor states:

This strategy seems more as a cancellation of the state of law than a war. Because war does not cancel law. War supposes the respect of certain international conventions, of certain rights for prisoners and combatants; it supposes the respect

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<sup>86</sup>Convention 169 of the International Labor Organization grants the indigenous peoples and tribes the right, guaranteed by the state, to keep and enhance their culture, customs, regulations, economic development, and political institutions. For a comprehensive account of Convention 169 and its application to the San Andrés Accords see: ILO, *Indigenous and Tribal Peoples: A Guide to ILO Convention 169*, Geneva, Switz.: ILO, 1998.

for negotiations, pacts, or capitulation. War is not necessarily the abolition of law.<sup>87</sup>

The EZLN knew in advance about this discourse, and the strategy that implements it. As stated in their *First Declaration of the Lacandon Jungle*, it has therefore asked the international organizations and the international Red Cross to “observe and regulate any combat involving our forces so as to protect the civilian population.”<sup>88</sup> They had also declared that they “were, and will always be, subject to the Laws of War of the Geneva Convention.”<sup>89</sup> For the Zedillo regime, however, laws have been observed only within areas controlled by the army and on organizations that it decides suit its understanding of impartiality.

If respect of the Constitution is the pillar for securing Mexico’s national security, as Zedillo himself has stated in the *National Development Plan 1995-2000*, then the regime has been threatening the security of the nation all along through its flagrant violation of the laws and the Constitution. This is an important point, particularly when the levels of political accountability are still very low, economic vulnerability very high, and the acts of governmental impunity are uncontrolled. Certainly, there has been a delicate analogy between “national security” and “regime security”. On the other hand, although the Constitution has to be protected, an aspect that the EZLN has never contested, some of the amendments to it —carried out by a regime whose legitimacy has always been contested—such as those pertaining to Article 27, have clearly not been based on a profound appreciation of the class

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<sup>87</sup>Interview with Salvador Corro, *Proceso*, no. 1105, January 4, 1998.

<sup>88</sup>*Declaration of the Lacandon Jungle: Today we Say “Enough,”* in John Ross and Frank Bardacke (eds), *op. cit.*, p. 52.

<sup>89</sup>*Ibid.*

and ethnic conflicts that have existed for centuries.

When 10 million indigenous citizens and their history are ignored or not perceived as a “problem” by a regime with a very debatable legitimacy, how can a complete respect toward the Constitution be expected? The problem is that a particular bloc, such as the technocratic elite that has been in power since 1982, reacts to internal and external pressures by only considering the facts as they are perceived at the moment they hold power, ignoring the multilevel, complex and contradictory reality which demands a more complex analysis and a higher political sensitivity.

The social, economic and political consequences of such narrow policies can overwhelm the bloc’s political capacity to manage them, particularly where the exercise of presidential power exceeds the institutional limits that the political system has created. This results in an intensification of social conflicts that end up being dealt with by the use of coercion and force. This also produces a military sector that acquires a disproportionate amount of power during the specific conjuncture but is seriously discredited in the long-run. The consequences of transferring so much power to the military in conditions of economic and political vulnerability can be very risky, particularly if the “third link” as Carlos Fazio states, “finally closes the circle of dependency.”<sup>90</sup>

If the “circle closes,” Mexico’s national security will become an integral part of the US national security debate and the country will lose its last bits of sovereignty. As a Mexican researcher and CISEN advisor stated bluntly: “if you want to know more about Mexico’s future national security concepts and practices you just have to go to

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<sup>90</sup>Carlos Fazio, *op. cit.*, p. 179

Washington.<sup>91</sup>

The left-centre opposition, a number of government officials, some PRI and PAN members, several sectors of Mexico's civil society, the academe as well as the EZLN, have always warned the technocratic bloc about the risks of seriously eroding the nation's sovereignty. Unfortunately, the monologue continues.

However imperfect, democracy, particularly 'participatory democracy,' is taking a grip on Mexico's society. The voice of the EZLN's leadership and demands have been transferred, at a national level, to the Frente Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (Zapatista National Liberation Front or FZLN), the National Indigenous Congress (CNI), representing more than 30 ethnic groups, and the autonomous municipalities which have sprung across the country. This forebodes a more mature and powerful Mexican civil society.

In the end, there is no doubt that both parties want a rational and unitary state that can provide security to the nation. The difference lies on the political and economic bases for such rationality and unity. For the technocratic regime, these are found in the 'immediate': globalization, competitiveness, neoliberalism, a 'managed democracy', and palliatives for the marginalized.<sup>92</sup> For the 'transgressors,' these are found through accepting the pains from the

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<sup>91</sup>Confidential interview with CISEN advisor and UNAM researcher, Mexico City, December, 1995.

<sup>92</sup>The Zedillo regime is willing to deliver to Chiapas US \$55,777 million plus US \$1.9 million from the UN in the next three years. However, it will not discuss the socio-political causes of such misery which it considers as part of 'the past,' nor will it honor the San Andrés Accords that have been appraised by the ILO as a model of Convention 169, and signed and ratified by Mexico. It will also not consider discussing changes to the constitution that might be the key for political stability and social peace. For figures regarding the regime's 'relief programs' see: *Masiosare*, "Los enredos de la ofensiva" supplement of *La Jornada*, Sunday April 26, 1998.

contradictions of history and confronting them by securing for *all* the peoples of the nation the unresolved demands for work, land, housing, food, health, education, independence, freedom, democracy, justice, and peace.

It is apparent that the nation-state is still the fundamental pillar to obtain all these demands. Its security, therefore, beyond the potential of external threats, resides on a concrete sovereignty and on its form of government. For Mexico, these are enshrined in Article 39 of the Constitution, which clearly states:

National sovereignty resides essentially and originally in the people. All public power derives from the people and is instituted for its benefit. In every moment, the people have the inalienable right to alter or modify the form of government.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>93</sup>*Constitución Política de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos*, Título Segundo, Artículo 39, Mexico: UNAM, Instituto de Investigaciones Jurídicas de la UNAM, 1997, at internet address <<http://info1.juridicas.unam.mx/legfed/250/40.htm>>. (Translation is mine.)

### Conclusion

*La noche pasará.  
Pueden escupir las aguas,  
Pueden fusilar a los gorriones,  
Pueden quemar los versos.  
Pueden degollar al dulce lirio.  
Pueden romper el canto y arrojarlo a una ciénaga.  
Pero esta noche pasará.*

*This night will end.  
They can spit into the waters,  
They can shoot the sparrows,  
They can burn the verses,  
They can behead the sweet lily,  
They break the chant and throw it to the marshes,  
Yet this night will end.*

*Manuel Scorza<sup>1</sup>*

For those who have been marginalised by the very unpopular neoliberal policies carried out since 1982, the last 16 years have perhaps been the worst of their nightmares. Moreover, the 10 million indigenous peoples, as an integral part of the nation, are being forced to disappear as a unique community. However, with the 1994 Zapatista upheaval, a light of hope revived their aspirations for pursuing their historical demands. It did not take long for such hopes to be shared by those who believe that the material bases of the state's sovereignty (i.e., its key resources, its social and public security regimes, and its cultural and educational institutions) are disintegrating into a regional and international hegemonic project.

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<sup>1</sup>Quoted in Marcos' declaration of July 17, 1998. Appeared in *La Jornada*, July 17, 1998. (Translation is mine).

This project, led by the United State's 'historic bloc', and supported by Mexico's political and economic elites, has been perceived by a large number of Mexicans as a direct threat to the country's national security.

In the name of 'modernization' and 'progress', the neoliberal regimes of Miguel De la Madrid Hurtado (1982-1988), Carlos Salinas de Gortari (1988-1994) and Ernesto Zedillo (1994-2000), neglected and dismantled a number of post-revolutionary institutions. For the minorities who have benefitted from this process, the demands and present concerns of those historically marginalised are considered as mere anachronisms. However, as our thesis has shown, the indiscriminate tampering with key historical political and legal institutions can present a serious threat to the security of the nation.

Neglecting and dismantling such institutions not only eroded the legitimacy of these regimes but developed a serious gap between their discourses of modernity and democracy and their everyday more repressive politico-military actions. This situation has been aggravated by the fact that the military and the police have been pushed to become involved in activities contrary to their legal mandate. Therefore, the national institutions that are meant to protect the nation and its citizens have been weakened with internal insecurity increasing. Moreover, the imposition of a set of values and ideas, completely alien to the majority of the people, and more specifically to the indigenous communities, threatened some of the traditional notions of social solidarity, and therefore, national cohesion.

Although these liberal regimes maintained a nationalist discourse, it has been cynically used, as the gap between rich and poor continues to widen, to perpetuate the concentration of economic and political power in the hands of a small economic and political elite.

However, when an authoritarian regime is unveiled, the relation between the regime and those who make up the essence of sovereignty (the people) is finally conceived by the majority as one of oppression and disrespect to the sovereignty of the nation.

In this sense, the Zapatista upheaval has not challenged the nation or the state. It has challenged the disregard that a set of neoliberal regimes have had toward the essence of sovereignty: its citizens. The problem for securing the nation, therefore, resides in a real lack of political freedom and social and legal justice accompanied by an equal distribution of the nation's wealth.

As noted in the opening premise of this thesis, it is undeniable that in 1982 Mexico's economic structures were going through an unprecedented crisis due to domestic and external pressures. Moreover, it is unquestionable that Mexico's political and economic systems had to undergo major transformations. However, the imposition of neoliberal policies by a set of regimes with increasingly eroding levels of legitimacy made the painful reforms extremely unpopular. Such neoliberal policies were based on a fatalist view of the nation's political, social and economic future in which Mexico's security could only be achieved by politically and socially satisfying the principles of neoliberal economics.

*The triumph of liberalism, democracy and progress or the triumph of capital?*

For those who saw in political and economic liberalism the "end of history" and of "the great debates," accompanied by the triumph of the individual over ideology and class struggle, the Zapatista upheaval, although small in its geographical and military dimensions,



has proven them quite wrong.<sup>2</sup> The strong resurgence of expressions of class struggles and self-determination has seriously questioned the teleological discourses and practices of economic and political liberalism at national, regional and global levels.

What has really triumphed, as seen in our case study, is a presumption that Gramsci had understood way before the ‘triumph of liberalism’, and it is that the “globalization of the liberal practice decentralizes states, which permits the capitalist production to be free from the constant vigilance of non economic forces.”<sup>3</sup> This practice has been essentially twofold: 1) to match politics with economics (strictly based on economic interests) and, 2) to dissolve politics into pure economics. For Gramsci, the *grande state borghese supernazionale* in which custom barriers are dissolved and markets are freed from any politico-legal barriers were to fundamentally favor “the big enterprise and the large international capitalist conglomerates.”<sup>4</sup> As Jose Luis Orozco in *Sobre el orden liberal del mundo* (1995) suggested, “The modern state was to become a great corporation.”<sup>5</sup>

This process, which challenges the historical complexities of political struggles in a broader sense, is ideologically based on what Ignacio Ramonet has labeled the *pensée*

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<sup>2</sup>For the ideal notions of a classless society managed by a unitary civil society see: Daniel Bell, *The End of Ideology*, NY: Free Press, 1960. For the triumph of liberalism and the individual over totalitarianism see: Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*, NY: The Free Press, 1992.

<sup>3</sup>Quoted in José Luis Orozco, *Sobre el Orden Liberal del Mundo*, Mexico: Editorial Porrúa & UNAM, 1995, p. 137. Original quotation in Antonio Gramsci, “la Lega delle Nazioni”, in Gramsci, *La Città Futura, 1917-1918*, (Compilation by Sergio Caprioglio), Italy, Torino: Giulio Einaudi editori, 1982, (translation is mine)

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 138.

<sup>5</sup> Ibidem. (Translation is mine)

*unique*.<sup>6</sup> An ironic characteristic of this “*pensée unique*” is its complete lack of tolerance regarding any alternative views on economic development and political change. This intolerance is accompanied by a strengthening of the coercive apparatuses of the state, justified by what JL Orozco calls the principles of “*realeconomik*”.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, contrary to what the dominant regimes presume, instead of protecting the nation, the increase in state coercion only unleashes the deep historical tensions between the marginalised and the dominant classes and political elites. One of the more serious results of these tensions, in a context of higher economic and politico-military dependency, is of an erosion of the nation-state’s social and political cohesion.

As a result, the Mexican state, no longer considered a Third World country since becoming a member of the OECD, is now confronted with security problems acknowledged by authors like Edward E. Azar & Chung-in Moon, Mohammed Ayoob, Brian Job, or Thomas Weiss and Meryl Kessler as part of those countries in which the political and economic development of the national-state is still at a level in which its national security threats are mainly to be found in its internal vulnerabilities.

But perhaps the most dramatic consequence of the erosion of Mexico’s sovereignty is to see, as Caroline Thomas’ work depicts, the nation-state being trapped in a vicious circle

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For the factual identification, and coining of La “*pensée unique*” see Ignacio Ramonet, “*la pensée unique*”, in *Le Monde Diplomatique*, January 1995. For an excellent follow up of this article, particularly regarding its historical process in the US and its insertion as an ideological tool within the regional and global restructuration of the US hegemonic project see Susan George, “*Comment la pensée devint unique*,” in *Le Monde Diplomatique*, August 1996.

<sup>7</sup>José Luis Orozco, “Of the *realeconomik*: of the interest and the reason of the markets”, in José Luis Orozco, op. cit., pp.105-141.

in which increasing economic, political and military dependency is accompanied by higher levels of national and human insecurity. This “vicious circle”, described by Carlos Fazio, as the “third link”, acknowledges the need to reassess the literature on dependency that, although it does not offer us clear notions on national security, does present us with a very comprehensive historical framework regarding the political and economic limits for the advancement of better notions and practices of national security.

*The need for new paradigms for national security*

As this thesis has shown, there is an urgent need to develop a more complex analytical framework to explain the causes and potential solutions for Mexico’s national security challenges (and those of other countries in similar situations). Such a framework, among other considerations, has to include notions of historical class struggles at national, sub-regional and international levels, as well as race, gender, environmental and developmental considerations related to notions of human security.<sup>8</sup>

Moreover, it must include transformative notions. By transformative we mean those ideas reflecting a critical analysis of the concrete situations that, articulated to policy strategies, can induce changes regarding the socioeconomic and political structures that have a direct impact on security. Therefore, we have to go beyond the description of the present, with an allegorical use of the past, and undertake a profound revision of the historical

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<sup>8</sup>For an excellent work on the problems of economic development and their security impact see: Jorge Nef, *Human Security and Mutual Vulnerability: An Exploration Into the Global Political Economy of Development*, Ottawa: International Development Research Center, 1995.

contradictions that are constantly unveiling the deeper tendencies and powers of social and political realities. In this sense, Roy Bhaskar's 'critical realist' notion of social reality, as "an ensemble of tendencies and powers which, unlike natural ones, exist only as long as they (or at least some of them) are being exercised"<sup>9</sup> is fundamental, for it denotes the importance of the dialectical versus uni-linear relation between social agents and social structures. A 'critical realist' understanding of social and political reality considers that, beyond the apparent facts as being the only true and tangible reality, there is a set of multilevel and stratified historical structures that are reproduced or transformed through a dialectical interaction with social and political forces.

When the dialectical and contradictory state of social relations and historical structures is ignored, as it has been by the liberal regimes in Mexico, the dominant notions and practices of national security have results counter to their purpose. Therefore, when a dialectical and historical approach is taken, and the socioeconomic antagonisms are clearly identified, the unstable state of international relations as well as the one pertaining to nations reveal themselves as being more complex than just a 'natural' expression of a struggle for sheer power.

Perceptions of fear and threat, hence, can no longer be only explained as products from a "state of war" between self-interested states but as historical expressions of social relations dominated by structures of unequal distribution of wealth and political power. In this sense, the work of Robert Cox gives us a more comprehensive framework for understanding

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<sup>9</sup>Roy Bhaskar, *Reclaiming Reality: A Critical Introduction to contemporary Philosophy*, London/New York: Verso, 1993, p. 79.

both international and national conflicts. Conflict, as Cox understands it, is understood as a product of contending economic and political projects derived from the struggles between antagonistic national and transnational forces. Because historically such projects transcended national borders, they can ignite internal and external conflicts between those who adhere to their core values and those who oppose them as threats to the nation. Therefore, ideas and values related to specific economic and political projects, are considered to threaten or secure the nation-state. It is in this sense that Gramsci's notions on revolution and change are critical to understand the different political stages that different social forces undertake to reaffirm their class and ethnic identities within a specific national or transnational project.

As we have shown in this thesis, the EZLN has stressed the fact that the ideas and values of those who have been marginalised can be crucial for the security of the nation. In putting in practice this thesis, the EZLN has moved, in a Gramscian sense, from a "war of position" to an "active revolution", and back to a redefined "war of position". This repositioning has shown that the Zapatistas have been careful not to fall into the traps of *Realpolitik*. Instead, they have set the stage for a national debate regarding the core values and ideas that ought to form the normative, ethical and objective bases for the security of the nation.

However, the EZLN, as well as other revolutionary movements such as the EPR or the ERPI, confront a complex reality in which, added to class and race struggles, natural resources are becoming more scarce. In this sense, the study on Chiapas by Philip Howard and Thomas Homer-Dixon has shown us that, although demands for land can be legitimate, they have to contend with an environment that cannot accommodate all of them. Despite this

fact, political and social stability, and hence higher levels of national security, still depend ultimately on more just and equal socioeconomic and political structures. Therefore, any comprehensive notion of national security must be based on the potential threat to the national cohesion and stability that the perpetuation of unjust and unequal structures represents.

*Reforming the state and its national security*

With all its social, political and economic imperfections, the post-revolutionary regime did provide the indigenous peoples and the campesinos, paradoxical as it may seem, with a higher level of security than at present. Nevertheless, the EZLN and other indigenous organizations and social forces are far from asking the state to reinstate all the past political and legal regimes. They are asking *all* political and social forces to restructure the state by including them as unique nations within the federation. Perhaps their most compelling proposal is the urgent need for a fourth level of government. It is important to note, contrary to what the present regime has suggested, that the indigenous peoples have not shown any signs of wanting to secede from the nation-state. As we have seen in this thesis, their position has always been the opposite: they are demanding an urgent redefinition of the nation-state *for national security reasons*.

For those who still believe that the objective conditions that jeopardize the security of any nation-state are to be found in a direct politico-military attack from an external actor, or from internal threats to the state apparatuses or the political regime, the political and social

reality can prove them quite wrong. The threats to a nation-state, as the Zapatista upheaval has shown, are to be found in a set of multiple and complex factors that not only include potential external economic and/or politico-military threats. Paradoxically, such threats can also be found within those state apparatuses that are supposed to protect the citizens, territory, core values and institutions of the nation-state. Moreover, the causes of such threats are not to be found only in the 'immediate' — which is why the EZLN wants to go beyond just a peace accord accompanied with an immediate disarmament process— but in the unjust socioeconomic and political conditions that have prevailed for centuries.

However, to accept and confront these threats it takes a set of radical political and economic compromises from a regime that, as a 'historical bloc' with clear and specific class interests, will find it extremely difficulties to undertake such compromises.

*Searching for Mexico's national security?*

The search for the national security of any nation is an endeavour which has no end: the social, political and economic structures in which nations are immersed never stop changing. Moreover, the international environment is also undergoing constant transformations, and the nations that compose it are in different ways dialectically interacting with changing transnational economic and social forces. However, some things have not yet changed as swiftly as some would believe or want. Although our perceptions of space and time have been altered, regarding the geopolitical situation of most nation-states, things are still quite the same. Mexico, as a sovereign entity is still in a specific geopolitical setting. Its

past is still present through its unique culture, values, institutions and people. However, its place *as a sovereign nation-state*, and the survival of its unique identity are not guaranteed, as strong as the collective memories can be. What prevails is the strong faith of its people in keeping a national project, derived from the nineteenth century War of Independence as well as from the 1910 Revolution, alive. However, for this faith to persist, it has to be shared by the majority of its citizens. Yet to share a project is not only to announce it through very costly publicity campaigns or patronage programs, it is about creating solid socioeconomic and political conditions for social and national cohesion. For the misfortune of those in need of such solidarity, the liberal project praises individual competitiveness over the community and social solidarity.

Although notions of sovereignty and self-determination are, in different ways, going through a dramatic redefinition, the strengthening of certain levels of political, cultural, and economic sovereignty is still fundamental for the security of nations. As long as collective memories endure, there will be the need to develop some kind of sovereign political organization that secures them. If it is the desire of those who integrate the nation-state to continue relying on its historical space defined by sovereignty, states and those who manage them, have the foremost responsibility to continue the national project originated in both the War of Independence and the Revolution. However, when those who are there to ensure the protection of the binding institutions begin to respond to their self-interest or/and alien projects, they jeopardize the security of the nation.

The art of balancing external demands and pressures with historical internal needs is to acknowledge and challenge such demands and pressures by keeping the majority's national



project alive. However, in a nation-state where class and racial divisions become unmanageable, the vulnerability of the nation-state and of the national project increase dramatically. There can be a variety of responses to this critical situation. Some nation-states collapse, as did the Soviet Union, the German Democratic Republic or Yugoslavia; others see dormant forces wake up and demand, for the sake of the survival of the nation, the state be restructured or let it follow the same fate as those nations that collapse with unmeasurable human consequences.

Therefore, national security cannot be only for a class, a dominant ethnic group or a political elite. For a nation to survive, security has to be guaranteed to every citizen of the nation. This of course, demands higher levels of political and economic democracy which, for the contemporary capitalist system can present a serious problem, for to fully guarantee the long-lasting security of everybody, the state, with a strong and organized civil society, must find ways to eradicate class, ethnic, racial and gender inequalities, and there is no consensus as to how this can be done.

To achieve such an ideal standard of national and human security, the dominant classes and political elites have to give up their excessive economic and political privileges. This, unfortunately, has not happened in Mexico: the rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer. Thus, armed revolution has become the option for those who see their livelihood vanishing.

History has shown us that when a nation's political and economic system has higher levels of democracy, a more equal system for wealth distribution, higher levels of accountability, and respect for the dignity of its citizens, the higher are the chances for the

**nation-state to act as a rational and unitary actor, and hence survive. This is why Mexico's survival depends on a new national pact with new national and human security bases. Such bases, although essentially seek the same goal, can be positioned and forwarded on two conceptual axes. The first can be of a normative, ethical and moral nature and the second of a pragmatic and operative one. As incomplete as they may, the contents of such axes can be summarized in the following points (of which some, we must acknowledge, are part of the Constitution):**

**I) Normative, ethical and moral axis:**

- Sovereignty must once and for all reside on the people, including the indigenous peoples with their core values and culture guaranteed and respected.
- All the constitutional articles related to the protection of the most fundamental human rights and the dignity of individuals must be untouched and their enforcement constantly reassessed.
- The Constitution must enshrine the notions and practices of social solidarity and enforced them by a more comprehensive body of laws pertaining to social and human security.
- It must be explicitly acknowledged in the Constitution that, for the security of the nation, the present economic system, with its class and ethnic contradictions, must be replaced by a more just and equal system.
- The balance among the three powers of government must be strictly respected.
- The federal powers must strictly respect the powers of the states that compose the federation and their constitutions (as long as they do not go against the Federal Constitution).
- Any development project must be based on principles of sustainable development.
- The state must reassess its principles of foreign policy by keeping those which deter any politico-military intervention but adapting others that, for humanitarian reasons, acknowledge the need for the state's more active participation in the UN humanitarian relief efforts.
- From the above point, and only in response to it, state sovereignty can no longer be

understood as *absolute* but as *relative*.

## II) Pragmatic and operative axis:

- The state must apply unconditionally ILO Convention 169 to all indigenous communities of Mexico, even if this means reviewing some of NAFTA's chapters or reforming article 27 of the Constitution.
- The National Human Rights Commission must be reformed as to become a truly independent ombudsman with ample powers of observance.
- The civil servants of all powers of the federation must not be coerced to become members of any political party or organization, and if the case may be that a servant is a member of a political party and organization, he or she should be strictly prohibited to use his or her public office for his or her political interests.
- The military and the police must restructure their hiring and labor conditions as well as their educational programs. Moreover, their spheres of competence must be in accordance with the actual Constitution.
- The state, with the direct cooperation of the organized civil society, must continue the process of reforming the electoral regime to further guarantee freer and more just elections.
- All self-proclaimed rebellious forces which count an popular support must be considered as legitimate forces and not as criminal offenders.
- The state must have, as a result of higher levels of interdependence, with strict legal and political instruments of accountability, constant contact with the military forces of other states, however, the interference from any alien army must be strictly prohibited and only based on the United Nations Charter.
- Key natural resources, including basic foods, must continue, whatever the external pressures may be, to be under the control of an accountable and democratic state and not 'in the hands' of the market.

After seeing the adverse impacts on both national and human security, political elites engaging hastily in regional or international agreements, reforming key constitutional articles, and ignoring the will of the majority of the people, must weigh critically the consequences of their self-interested acts. Those who hold economic and political power must be cautious

**and sensitive, for their own fate depends on the respect of all the peoples of the nation. Therefore, when putting forward policies that do not reflect the deeply rooted historical socioeconomic and political contradictions of the nation they can put in jeopardy their interests and those of all the nation. It is apparent that the security of nations can only be achieved by a truly democratic and classless society, an ideal that at our present time seems yet out of the reach of the majority of Mexico's citizens and the rest of the millions of marginalised peoples around our planet.**

## Appendix 1 (Chapter V)

Table 2.5 Level of marginalization by municipality and percentage of Economically Active Population (EAP) receiving less than one minimum or no salary.\*

Municipality	Level of Marginalization	% of EAP receiving less than one minimum or no salary
San Juan Cancuc	1	94.49
Tenejapa	29	91.98
Larrainzar	7	91.97
Amatenango del Valle	16	91.93
Chanal	8	90.93
Huistan	20	89.17
Chenalhó	10	88.85
Porvenir, El	37	88.25
Grandeza, La	41	88.01
Francisco León	5	87.44
Chapultenango	28	87.40
Sitalá	3	87.20
Bejucal de O.	27	86.87
Oxchuc	19	86.72
Altamirano	25	86.62
Mitontic	2	86.48
Tumbala	14	86.19
Ocoatepec	13	86.04
Independencia, La	52	85.24
Chilon	9	84.90
Huitiupan	23	84.42
Mazapa de Madero	44	84.08
Amatan	12	83.91
Bella Vista	39	83.83
Siltepec	31	83.65
Ixtanpangajoya	33	83.11
Chaumla	6	82.92
Chalchihuitan	4	82.33
Totolopan	34	82.22
P. Nvo. Solistahuacan	32	82.05
Sabanilla	17	81.74
Coapilla	57	81.65
Amatenango de la F.	56	81.51
Margaritas, Las	26	81.50
San Lucas	40	80.82
Tila	24	80.73
Zinacantan	18	80.68
Tapalapa	35	80.17
Union Juarez	93	79.99
Pantelho	11	79.99
Pantepec	21	78.82
Chiapilla	63	78.82
Ocosingo	30	78.78
Jinto		

Jitotol	47	78.16
Sunuapa	15	78.04
Ishuatan	45	77.97
Bosque, El	42	77.55
Salto del Agua	22	77.19
Trinitaria, La	54	77.06
Ixtapa	71	74.77
Chicomuselo	46	74.69
Ostuacan	38	73.35
Teopisca	58	72.39
Simojovel de Allende	36	72.11
Tzimol	51	72.01
Copainala	76	72.01
Tuzantan	61	71.97
Motozintla	78	70.74
Soyaló	75	70.63

\*The table's order is from the municipality having the highest level of marginalization (=1) plus the highest percentage of EAP occupied receiving less than one minimum salary (=94.49%).

Source: Octavio Rodríguez Araujo, "Espacio y Determinaciones de la rebelión chiapaneca," in *Estudios Políticos*, Cuarta Época, No. 5, October/December, 1994, pp. 17-18. Original data from INEGI, *XI Censo General de Población y Vivienda*, Mexico 1992; and Consejo Nacional de Población (CONAPO), *Sistema Automatizado de Información sobre la Marginación en México*, 1990.

## Appendix 1.VL (Chapter VI)

### Declaration of the Lacandon Jungle: Today We Say “Enough”

To the People of Mexico  
Mexican brothers and sisters,

We are the product of five hundred years of struggle: first against slavery; then in the insurgent-led war of independence against Spain; later in the fight to avoid being absorbed by North American expansionism; next to proclaim our Constitution and expel the French from our soil; and finally, after the dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz refused to fairly apply the reform laws, in the rebellion where the people created their own leaders. In that rebellion Villa and Zapata emerged—poor men, like us.

We are denied the most elementary education so that they can use us as cannon fodder and plunder our country’s riches, uncaring that we are dying of hunger and curable diseases, nor do they care that we have nothing, absolutely nothing, no decent roof over our heads, no land, no work, no health, no food, no education. We do not have the right to freely democratically elect our own authorities, nor are we independent of foreigners, nor do we have peace or justice for ourselves and our children.

But today we say enough! We are the heirs of the people who truly forged our nation, we are millions of the dispossessed, and we call on our brothers and sisters to join us on the only path that will allow us to escape a starvation caused by the insatiable ambition of a seventy-year-old dictatorship, led by a small inner clique. They are those who opposed Hidalgo and Morelos, those who betrayed Vicente Guerrero, those who sold more than half our territory to the foreign invader, those who more than half a century ago brought a European prince to govern us, those who formed a dictatorship of científicos porfiristas, those who opposed the Petroleum Expropriation, and those who massacred the railroad workers in 1958 and the students in 1968—they are all the very same ones who today take everything from us, absolutely everything.

After we tried to do everything legally possible, based on our Magna Carta, to stop all this, as a last hope we invoke that same document, our constitution, Article 39, which says:

“National sovereignty resides essentially and originally, in the people. All public power emanates from the people, and is constituted for the benefit of the same *The people have, at all times, the inalienable right to alter or modify the form of government.*”

Therefore, as per the terms of our Constitution, we send the declaration to the Mexican Federal Army, one of the basic pillars of the dictatorship under which we suffer. The army is controlled exclusively by the party in power, headed by the federal executive office, which is today unlawfully held by the illegitimate head of state, Carlos Salinas de Gortari.

Congruent with the *Declaration of War*, we ask other powers of the Nation to take up the fight to depose the dictator and restore legitimacy and stability in this nation.

We also ask the international organizations and the International Red Cross observe and regulate any combat involving our forces so as to protect the civilian population; we declare that we are not, and always will be, subject to the Laws of War of the Geneva Convention, which defines the EZLN as a belligerent force in our struggle for liberation.

The Mexican people are on our side; we are patriots and our insurgent soldiers love and respect our tricolored flag; we use red and black on our uniforms, the same colors working people use when on strike; on our flag are the letters "EZLN," Zapatista Army of National Liberation, and we always carry that flag to battle.

We reject, in advance, any and all efforts to discredit the just cause of our struggle by accusing us of being drug traffickers, or drug guerillas, or bandits, or whatever other characterizations our enemy might use. Our struggle is in accordance with our constitutional rights and our goal is justice and equality.

Therefore, and in accordance with this Declaration of War, we give the military forces of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation the following orders:

First: Advance to the capital of the country, defeat the Mexican Federal Army, protecting and liberating the civilian population along our liberating march, and permit the liberated peoples to elect, freely and democratically, their own administrative authorities.

Second: Respect the life of all prisoners and turn over any wounded to the International Red Cross for medical attention.

Third: Initiate summary judgments against the soldiers of the Mexican Federal Army and the political police who have taken course or have been advised, or trained, or paid by foreigners either inside or outside our country; those who are accused of treason; and those who repress or mistreat the civilian population or assault the public welfare.

Fourth: Form new ranks with Mexicans who show an interest in joining our just cause, including those enemy soldiers who give up without fighting our troops and who swear to follow the orders of the General Command of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation.

Fifth: Ask the unconditional surrender of enemy barracks before making war against them.

Sixth: Suspend the plunder of our natural resources in all the areas controlled by the *EZLN*.

**PEOPLE OF MEXICO:** We, men and women, upright and free, are conscious that the war we now declare is a last resort, but it is also just. The dictatorship has been waging an undeclared genocidal war against our communities for many years. We now ask for your committed participation and support for this plan of the people of Mexico who struggle for work, land, housing, food, education, independence, freedom, democracy, justice, and peace. We declare that we will not stop fighting until we win these basic demands of our people, forming a free and democratic government.

Join the insurgent forces of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation.

General Command of the EZLN  
The year 1993



## APPENDIX 2.VL (Chapter VI)

### A CHRONOLOGY OF THE HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 1994 CHIAPAS UPHEAVAL AND THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE EZLN AND THE MEXICAN GOVERNMENT, 1994-1998<sup>1</sup>

**January 1, 1994:** The primarily indigenous Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) stages an armed uprising in the southeastern Mexican state of Chiapas, demanding democracy, liberty, and justice for all Mexicans. The EZLN's General Command issues the *First Declaration of the Lacandon Jungle* and the municipalities of San Cristóbal de las Casas, Ocosingo, Las Margaritas, Altamirano, Chanal, Oxchuc, and Huixtan are all taken by the rebels.

**January 12, 1994:** Following nearly two weeks of heavy fighting, with casualties in the hundreds or possibly thousands, a cease-fire is declared by the Mexican government, and honored by the EZLN.

#### FIRST ATTEMPTS AT PEACE

**January 18, 1994:** Manuel Camacho Solís, former mayor of Mexico City, is recognized by the EZLN as the official government representative for negotiations.

**February 21, 1994:** The first direct dialogue between the EZLN and the federal government, moderated by San Cristóbal bishop Samuel Ruiz García, begins in the cathedral of San Cristóbal de las Casas.

**March 2, 1994:** The peace talks in San Cristóbal come to an end. 24 "tentative" agreements are reached based on the government's responses to 34 demands of the EZLN. The government has refused to make commitments regarding political issues on a national level. The EZLN declares that the results of the talks will be submitted to a long consultation among all the zapatista communities and civilian bases of support.

**March 24, 1994:** The EZLN's consultations are temporarily suspended due to the assassination of PRI presidential candidate Luis Donaldo Colosio. The EZLN condemns the assassination.

**May 30, 1994:** Consultations end in the Zapatista communities.

**June 12, 1994:** The Second Declaration of the Lacandon Jungle is issued by the EZLN. The results of the consultation are made public: 97.88% reject the government's proposals for reaching a definitive solution to the conflict, while only 2.11% are in favor of signing peace. However, only 3.26% manifest a desire to return to hostilities, so the decision is made to continue abiding by the cease-fire, while opening a new dialogue with Civil Society. The EZLN calls for the realization of a National

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<sup>1</sup>. Based on the following newspapers: *La Jornada*, *Reforma*, *El Financiero*, and *Excelsior*. Also from the journal *Proceso* and Joshua Paulson's chronology on the Web page of the FZLN: <<http://www.peak.org/joshua/fzln/>>

Democratic Convention.

**June 16, 1994:** The government negotiator, Manuel Camacho Solís, resigns his post while accusing the PRI's new presidential candidate, Ernesto Zedillo, of sabotaging the negotiations.

**August 5-9, 1994:** The **National Democratic Convention (CND)** is held in EZLN territory, Chiapas, with more than 6,000 people from around the country in attendance to dialogue with the Zapatistas.

**October 11, 1994:** The EZLN breaks off all talks with the federal government, citing continued repression, a build-up of the Mexican army's forces around their territory, and increased military provocations.

**October 26, 1994:** Bishop Samuel Ruiz proposes the formation of a plural, National Intermediation Commission (CONAI).

**December 1, 1994:** Ernesto Zedillo Ponce de León takes office as President of the United States of Mexico. Declares that "there will not be violence in Chiapas on the part of the government".

**December 8, 1994:** The EZLN considers the 11-month old cease fire to have been broken with the fraudulent imposition of Eduardo Robledo Rincón as the new governor of Chiapas.

**December 13, 1994:** *Subcomandante Marcos*, spokesperson and military commander of the EZLN, declares that the reinitiation of hostilities appears "imminent".

**December 19, 1994:** The EZLN launches a new, "nonviolent" military offensive in Chiapas with the help of the civilian population. Overnight, over half of Chiapas becomes "rebel territory" without a single shot being fired. 36 municipalities now remain under EZLN control.

**December 24, 1994:** The National Intermediation Commission (CONAI) is recognized as a valid mediator by both the EZLN and the federal government.

**December 27, 1994:** The federal government orders its troops to halt military operations in Chiapas. In response, the EZLN reopens the zone to civilian transit, and suspends further offensive operations.

**January 2, 1995:** The EZLN issues the Third Declaration of the Lacandon Jungle, calling for the formation of a new "National Liberation Movement". Declares that peace will only come "hand in hand with democracy, liberty, and justice for all Mexicans".

**January 7, 1995:** The EZLN announces a unilateral extension of the truce (called on December 27th) until January 13th.

**January 13, 1995:** The EZLN announces a new extension of the cease-fire until January 18th. Declares they will meet with government representatives on January 15th.

**January 15, 1995:** The EZLN meets with the CONAI and government representatives, including Secretary of the Interior, Estéban Moctezuma, in the Lacandon jungle. Both sides agree to work for

the establishment of a stable cease-fire and a reopening of negotiations.

**January 16, 1995:** The EZLN announces a “unilateral and indefinite cease-fire” of all threatening, hostile, or offensive military actions.

**February 9, 1995:** The federal government suddenly announces arrest warrants for those it accuses of being the “top Zapatista leadership”, unilaterally breaking the cease-fire, and launches a vast military offensive against the EZLN and their communities of supporters, both inside and outside of Chiapas. The EZLN, however, retreats into the mountains, as do most of their support bases, and refuses to return fire against the government troops.

**February 9-March 11, 1995:** The government continues its offensive, destroying and permanently occupying communities such as Guadalupe Tepeyac, bombing and wreaking havoc in other such as El Prado, and forcing over 20,000 indigenous supporters of the EZLN to flee into the mountains. The army is never able to locate the CCRI-CG of the EZLN in order to apply the arrest warrants. However, several dozen people in Chiapas, Mexico State, Veracruz, and Mexico City are arrested, tortured, and jailed on trumped-up terrorism charges for supposedly being members of the EZLN.

**March 11, 1995:** Upon tacitly recognizing the failure of the military operation, the Mexican Congress approves the **Law for Dialogue, Reconciliation and a Just Peace in Chiapas**. The law calls for a reinitiation of peace talks, and a suspension of military operations against the EZLN (as well as a suspension of arrest warrants against its supposed leadership), as long as the dialogue continues. A legislative commission composed by deputies of all parties, the Commission on Concordance and Pacification (COCOPA), will be in charge of facilitating and laying the bases for this new dialogue.

### THE DIALOGUE OF SAN ANDRÉS

**March 17:** The EZLN accepts the **Law for Dialogue, Reconciliation, and a Just Peace** in Chiapas.

**April 9, 1995:** A delegation of the CCRI-CG of the EZLN meets with representatives of the federal government, the CONAI, and the COCOPA in the village of San Miguel (municipality of Ocosingo) in order to agree upon the logistics and the agenda for the upcoming peace talks.

**April 20, 1995:** The EZLN and the federal government representatives meet for the first time in San Andrés Sacamch'en de los Pobres (Larrainzar), a Tzotzil Zapatista community in the highlands north of San Cristóbal, which will be the “permanent site of negotiations” between the two sides.

**April 21, 1995:** The federal government temporarily suspends the first meeting of the new peace talks, allegedly due to the presence of several thousand indigenous supporters of the EZLN who had arrived at San Andrés in order to take part in the civilian security cordons for the protection of the EZLN *comandantes*. The talks are renewed as soon as the CCRI-CG thanks their supporters, and asks them to return to their communities.

**May 10, 1995:** The EZLN rejects the government proposal to resolve the conflict by essentially cordoning off the insurgent troops of the EZLN into “autonomous” areas of relocation, which under the most favorable interpretations were seen as comparable to U.S.-style Indian Reservations; and

under the least favorable interpretations, were viewed as concentration camps.

**June 8, 1995:** The EZLN, frustrated by the government's refusal to negotiate anything on a national level, and by the continued insistence that the EZLN's presence, influence, and demands are "limited to four Chiapas municipalities", decides to convoke a massive national and international *Consulta* (consultation, or plebiscite) to let all Mexicans, and even foreigners, vote on the EZLN's demands, as well as on the very future of the rebel organization itself.

**August 27, 1995:** The *Consulta Nacional e Internacional* is carried out, with the participation of over 1.2 million Mexicans, and more than 100,000 people from outside of Mexico. 97.5% of national voters expressed agreement with the principal demands of the EZLN; 92.7% agreed that all the democratic forces in the country should unite in a broad social and political opposition front in order to fight for those demands; 94.5% approved of a "profound political reform" in order to guarantee democracy; 93.1% agreed that women should be guaranteed equal representation and participation at all levels of civil and governmental responsibilities; and 52.6% suggested that the EZLN should convert itself into a new and *independent* political force (while 48.7% suggested this should be done through a unification process with pre-existing organizations).

**September 10, 1995:** The EZLN lays out its proposal for the rules of the dialogue and the installation of working groups to deal with six major themes for the dialogue: **Indigenous Rights and Culture; Democracy and Justice; Welfare and Development; Reconciliation in Chiapas; Rights of Women in Chiapas;** and, finally, the **Cessation of Hostilities**.

**October 3, 1995:** Installation of the negotiating table in San Andrés regarding **Indigenous Rights and Culture**. The EZLN announces that, in accordance with the governing procedures for the San Andrés negotiations—which allow for an unspecified number of "advisors" and "guests" to join each side at the negotiating table—it has invited more than 100 intellectuals, activists, and representatives of social, cultural, and indigenous organizations to become "advisors" to the EZLN during the talks on Indigenous Rights and Culture, thus opening up the negotiations to representatives of civil society throughout Mexico.

**October 18-22, 1995:** The first phase of talks are held between the EZLN and the Federal Government with regards to **Indigenous Rights and Culture**. The working groups are divided into the following: 1) Community and Autonomy: Indigenous Rights; 2) Guarantees of Justice to the Indigenous Peoples; 3) Political Participation and Representation of the Indigenous Peoples; 4) The Situation, Rights, and Culture of Indigenous Women; 5) Access to the Means of Communication; and 6) Promotion and Development of Indigenous Culture.

**October 23, 1995:** The Mexican Attorney General's Office (PGR) announces the October 21st arrest in Mexico City of Fernando Yañez Muñoz, previously accused by the Federal Government of being "Comandante German" of the EZLN. The EZLN, in turn, declares the arrest to be a direct violation of the **Law for Dialogue and Reconciliation** (which specifically prohibits the arrest of those accused of being members or leaders of the EZLN, as long as the dialogue between the two sides continues). The EZLN declares a "red alert".

**October 27, 1995:** Under pressure from the COCOPA, Yañez Muñoz is released and charges against him dropped.

**October 28, 1995:** The EZLN suspends the “red alert”, and announces it will attend the upcoming second phase of peace talks in San Andrés regarding **Indigenous Rights and Culture**.

**November 13-18, 1995:** The second phase of talks regarding **Indigenous Rights and Culture** are held in San Andrés (with the same working group themes as phase I).

**December, 1995:** As the EZLN begins preparations for the New Year's celebration of the Second Anniversary of the Zapatista uprising, the Mexican Army heavily increases its presence in and around the indigenous communities of Chiapas. Tension is especially high surrounding the four new “Aguascalientes” being constructed in the villages of La Realidad, Oventic, La Garrucha, and Morelia.

**December 31, 1995-January 1, 1996:** Despite continuing threats of a new military offensive by the Mexican Army, the Zapatistas go ahead with their New Year's celebrations, and inaugurate the amphitheatres of the new, multiple Aguascalientes. The Fourth Declaration of Lacandon Jungle is issued by the EZLN, calling for the formation of a new zapatista organization—the Zapatista Front of National Liberation (FZLN)—which is to be a national, nonviolent, and independent civilian political force with its base in the EZLN. This carries out the EZLN's promise to abide by the results of the *Consulta Nacional e Internacional* held five months earlier.

**January 3-10, 1996:** The **National Indigenous Forum** is held in San Cristóbal de las Casas. The Forum, called for by the EZLN and its advisors, as well as the COCOPA and the CONAI, was devised so as to receive the opinions and thoughts from indigenous peoples and representatives all over Mexico—not just from Chiapas—whose decisions and proposals would then be taken up by the EZLN in the San Andrés talks. The Forum was attended by 24 *comandantes* of the EZLN, as well as nearly 500 representatives of over 30 indigenous groups from throughout the country.

**February 16, 1996:** Following a prolonged consultation with the indigenous civilian bases of the EZLN, the Zapatistas and the federal government sign the first set of accords resulting from the Dialogue of San Andrés: 40 pages of national reforms to be undertaken regarding **Indigenous Rights and Culture**. But *Comandante David* warns: “This is only a small agreement, on paper. We will not be tricked into thinking that what has been signed is a peace agreement.” Meanwhile, arrangements are made for the second major set of talks, dealing with **Democracy and Justice**, to begin in San Andrés on March 5th.

**February 29, 1996:** The EZLN proposes that the participants in the National Indigenous Forum constitute themselves into a Permanent National Indigenous Forum (later to become the **National Indigenous Congress**).

**March 4, 1996:** The EZLN announces its list of advisors for the talks on **Democracy and Justice**. The list includes more than 125 people and organizations, from Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas to former leaders of the PRI and the PAN parties; representatives of the national debtor's movement *El Barzón*; the government in rebellion of Tepoztlán, Morelos; independent union representatives; journalists; authors; intellectuals; and cultural groups. It quickly becomes clear that with closed-door talks on “the reform of the State” underway between the leaders of the PRD, PAN, and PRI in Mexico City—with no participation whatsoever from civil society—the Zapatistas are attempting to use the talks on **Democracy and Justice** to broaden the negotiations on national political reforms to include substantial

input from Mexican civil society.

**March 21, 1996:** The negotiations on the issue of democracy and justice finally begin in San Andrés Sacamch'en de los Pobres. The dialogue quickly becomes a monologue, however, as the government's representatives refuse to discuss any of the EZLN's proposals; in fact, they seldom utter a single word. To the press, however, they insist that they are only interested in resolving *local* issues of "democracy and justice", not national reforms. The talks are further marred by increasing repression against indigenous and campesino groups in Chiapas, in police attacks which leave dozens dead, wounded, or taken prisoner whenever the negotiations seem to be on the verge of moving forward.

**April 4-8, 1996:** The **First Continental Encounter for Humanity and Against Neoliberalism** is held in the Zapatista *Aguascalientes* of La Realidad.

**May 2, 1996:** A judge in Tuxtla Gutiérrez finds journalist Javier Elorriaga and Tzeltal campesino Sebastián Entzin guilty of "terrorism" for supposedly belonging to the EZLN, and sentences them to 13 years and 6 years in prison, respectively. This provokes a severe crisis in the already strained dialogue, and on May 11th the EZLN declares a "red alert" among its troops.

**June 6, 1996:** An appellate court revokes the sentences against Elorriaga and Entzin, and releases them. The EZLN responds by standing down from its state of alert.

**June 28, 1996:** On the one-year anniversary of the massacre of 17 campesinos in Aguas Blancas, Guerrero by judicial police, a previously-unknown armed group identifying itself as the **Ejército Popular Revolucionario** or **Popular Revolutionary Army (EPR)** makes a dramatic appearance at the events commemorating the killings.

**June 30, 1996:** The **Special Forum for the Reform of the State** sponsored by the EZLN, begins in San Cristóbal de las Casas. The Forum is organized in a similar manner to the **National Indigenous Forum** of January, in the way that it attempts to open up the San Andrés talks on Democracy and Justice to otherwise excluded representatives of Civil Society.

**July 27, 1996:** The **First Intercontinental Encounter for Humanity and Against Neoliberalism** begins in the Zapatista *Aguascalientes* of Oventic, Chiapas, with the participation of nearly 5000 people from 42 countries.

**August 6, 1996:** The final plenary session of the talks on Democracy and Justice begin in San Andrés, with only minimal participation from the government's representatives.

**August 12, 1996:** The plenary session on Democracy and Justice ends with no agreement between the parts. The government attempts to close the negotiations on the theme, and move on to a new set of talks on other issues. This is firmly rejected by the EZLN.

**August 29, 1996:** The EZLN, following a process of consultation with its civilian bases, suspends its participation in the peace talks of San Andrés.

**October 9, 1996:** The EZLN announces that Comandante Ramona will be the EZLN's representative

at the meeting of the **Permanent National Indigenous Congress**, beginning in Mexico City the next day.

**November 7, 1996:** After a series of “tripartite” talks between the EZLN, the COCOPA, and the CONAI, the **Implementation and Verification Commission (COSEVER)** for the San Andrés Accords is finally installed in San Cristóbal de las Casas, with representation of the EZLN, the federal government, and civil society.

**November 24-29, 1996:** The COCOPA, CONAI, and EZLN continue meeting in San Cristóbal in order to work out a legislative initiative of constitutional reforms for the implementation of the San Andrés Accords on Indigenous Rights and Culture.

**November 29, 1996:** The Cocopa presents its “final” proposal for constitutional reforms on the issues of Indigenous Rights and Culture to both the EZLN delegation the Secretary of the Interior, Emilio Chuayffet. The EZLN and the government accept it

**December 5, 1996:** The Secretariat of the Interior backtracks on its original decision, and meets with the COCOPA to inform them that it no longer supports their proposal.

**December 7, 1996:** The COCOPA meets with President Zedillo to request that he intervene and accept the document before the entire peace process falls apart. The President decides to temporarily withdraw the comments of the Secretariat of the Interior, and writes a letter to the EZLN requesting a 15-day period with which to “examine” the COCOPA's proposal. The EZLN delegation accepts the Executive's request for a time extension, and on December 15th leaves San Cristóbal to return to their communities in the jungle and highlands.

**December 19, 1996:** The Cocopa receives the President's “response” which is, in reality, a counterproposal (and not a simple “yes” or “no”, which had previously been agreed upon), that not only rejects the COCOPA's initiative, but also the San Andrés Accords in their entirety.

**January 11, 1997:** The EZLN meets with the COCOPA in La Realidad, and rejects the government's proposal. The EZLN reiterates that it will not return to the negotiating table until the San Andrés Accords on Indigenous Rights and Culture are implemented. *Marcos* further calls on the COCOPA to defend its original proposal, and announces that the EZLN will await a public pronouncement of the COCOPA regarding the situation before making any further decisions.

**January 12 - March 4, 1997:** Military and police presence and repression dramatically increase in Chiapas while the country waits for the COCOPA's “public pronouncement”.

**February 1, 1997:** 9,000 civilian Zapatistas march through San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas, demanding that the government honor the San Andrés Accords on Indigenous Rights and Culture, and that it accept the COCOPA's constitutional reform proposal.

**March 4, 1997:** After more than 50 days of suspense, the COCOPA finally issues its public declaration on the situation conveying its decision to withdraw its constitutional reform proposal from legislative consideration. Five days later, the EZLN responds by criticizing the decision of the

COCOPA, and suggesting that their decision may actually have made matters much worse.

**March 7, 1997:** Public Security forces in the state of Chiapas violently expel 65 families belonging to the indigenous organization Xi'Nich from their homes near Palenque.

**March 8, 1997:** State judicial police violently kidnap two Jesuit priests—one of whom was an advisor to the EZLN, and two leaders of Xi'Nich, supposedly in connection with the previous day's events (although none of the four arrested were even in the region when the expulsions occurred). The four are tortured, held incommunicado for 48 hours, and eventually charged with the murder of police officers.

**March 13, 1997:** The two Jesuits and two leaders of Xi'Nich are freed unconditionally by a judge in Tuxtla Gutiérrez, citing the lack of evidence presented by the prosecution.

**March 14, 1997:** Members of the public security forces, the judicial police, and the Mexican army all take part in an attack against civilian Zapatistas in the community of San Pedro Nixtalucum, Chiapas (municipality of San Juan de la Libertad, formerly El Bosque). Four unarmed Zapatistas are killed, and 29 are beaten, detained, or disappeared. The remaining Zapatista civilians from San Pedro—more than 80 families—are expelled from their homes.

**April-July, 1997:** Militarization of indigenous communities continues throughout the Mexican republic. Dozens of indigenous people in Chiapas, mainly civilian Zapatistas, are killed by paramilitary squads or by police in the northern zone of Chiapas.

**July 6, 1997:** Federal mid-term elections are held throughout Mexico. In Chiapas, abstentionism rates reach levels greater than 80% in some municipalities.

**July 9, 1997:** President Ernesto Zedillo declares that the victory of opposition parties in the July 6th elections "legitimizes the PRI and the Mexican political system," and that as a result "there is no longer room for radicalisms operating outside the electoral sphere".

**Early August, 1997:** The COCOPA decides it will not attempt to present an initiative for constitutional reforms regarding Indigenous Rights and Culture until after September 1st, when the new Congress is inaugurated.

**September 8, 1997:** 1,111 members of the EZLN begin a "motorized march" from their communities in Chiapas to Mexico City in order to be present at the Founding Congress of the Frente Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (FZLN) and the Second National Assembly of the National Indigenous Congress, as well as to demand immediate government compliance with the San Andrés Accords on Indigenous Rights and Culture.

**September 26, 1997:** The new members of the COCOPA are finally chosen in the Chamber of Deputies (due to the July 6th elections, all the previously serving federal deputies on the COCOPA left their posts on September 1st when the new Congress was inaugurated; senators, meanwhile, were not affected). The new members of the COCOPA are thus the following: Roberto Albores Guillén (PRI); Javier Guerrero García (PRI); Gilberto López y Rivas (PRD); Carlos Morales Vázquez



(PRD); Carlos Payán (PRD); Felipe Vicencio Alvarez (PAN); Germán Martínez Cázares (PAN); Aurora Bazán López (PVEM); Miguel Angel Garza Velázquez (PVEM); Gerardo Acosta Zavala (PT); and José Luis López López (PT).

**November 4, 1997:** The PRI-backed paramilitary group *Paz y Justicia* opens fire with automatic weapons on a caravan of church workers from the Diocese of San Cristóbal, including Bishops Samuel Ruiz García and Raúl Vera López. Three catechists are wounded in the attack, which is roundly condemned by the Church, the CONAI, the COCOPA, and the EZLN.

**November 10, 1997:** The Mexican government sends a confidential document to the COCOPA, expressing its desire to re-establish peace talks “immediately” with the EZLN—but without having fulfilled the five pre-conditions laid out by the rebels in August of 1996.

**November 29, 1997:** The EZLN responds to the government's calls for “blank slate” negotiations, reiterating that the Zapatistas will only return to the negotiating table when the government begins to implement the San Andrés Accords and fulfills the remaining four conditions laid out when the dialogue was suspended on August 29th, 1996.

**December 22, 1997:** Following several months of threats and periodic violence against civilian Zapatistas in the municipality of Chenalhó, approximately 70 heavily armed members of a PRI-backed paramilitary group descend upon the town of Acteal. The attackers launch a 5-hour killing spree, murdering 45 people—mostly women and children who were trying to flee—and wounding at least 25 others. The massacre is observed by members of the public security police, who refuse to intervene.

**December 26, 1997:** Among more than 100 international organizations, the massacre is repudiated by the US government; the Prime Minister of France, Lionel Jospin; all members of the European Parliament; the General Secretary of the United Nations, Kofi Anan, and Amnesty International. The Mexican government rejected such condemnations and calls to immediately clarify the massacre as “interventionist acts”.

**December 27, 1997:** The Mexican government, through the Attorney General's Office, states that the causes of the massacre were of an inter-ethnic and inter-family nature. However, in what was appeared as a lack of intergovernmental communication, the Secretary of the Interior admits that they had known for quite a while of the existence of the paramilitary group involved in the massacre.

### **THE NEW OFFENSIVE: INCREASING THE LIC AND PROVOKING A WAR**

**January 1, 1998:** Using the massacre of Acteal as an excuse to make a call for “total disarmament of all the armed groups in Chiapas”, the federal government violates the Law for Dialogue, Reconciliation and Just Peace in Chiapas by launching a new military campaign designed to disarm the EZLN. Indigenous Zapatista communities are occupied or put under military siege by the army, while PRI-backed paramilitary groups responsible for the Acteal massacre continue to roam freely throughout the state. The EZLN does not respond militarily, insisting it still wants to see a political solution to the conflict. However, it warns the government that it has no intention of giving up its arms.

**January 3, 1998:** After a national and international campaign to demand a real investigation and clarification of the massacre of Acteal, including the European Parliament's statement in the sense that they would reject the free trade negotiations with Mexico if the political climate didn't change, the Secretary of the Interior, Emilio Chuayffet resigned and was replaced by Francisco Labastida Ochoa.

**January 7, 1998:** The Interim Governor of Chiapas, Julio César Ruiz Ferro also resigns and is replaced by Roberto Albores Guillén who is imposed by the Federal government without even consulting the state Congress, violating the Constitutional articles pertaining to the Federation.

**January 9, 1998:** General José Gómez Salazar, Commander of the Seventh Military Region (and therefore of all the troops in Chiapas), openly accuses San Cristóbal Bishop (and CONAI president) Samuel Ruiz García of being "involved" with the EZLN. The Diocese of San Cristóbal de las Casas "energetically rejects" the accusations.

**January 12, 1998:** Francisco Labastida announces a "profound restructuring" of the interior ministry. Emilio Rabasa Gamboa replaces Pedro Joaquín Coldwell as the chief government "negotiator" for talks with the EZLN, and Labastida names former Maoist guru Adolfo Orive (who once led the "Proletariat Line" and "Popular Politics" organizations in Chiapas, and is a sworn enemy of bishop Samuel Ruiz García) to head his own advisory corps.

**January 13, 1998:** Secretary of the Interior, Francisco Labastida, insists the army will remain "indefinitely" in Chiapas, and that it will "be the responsibility of the EZLN" to avoid armed clashes.

**January 23, 1998:** President Ernesto Zedillo lashes out at the EZLN during a speech in Kanasín, Yucatán. Zedillo claims his government "has never utilized force in Chiapas", and insists that it is the EZLN, not the federal government, which is seeking a violent, military solution to the conflict, and that it is the federal government, not the EZLN, which is trying to renegotiate the San Andrés Accords. PRD leaders and members of the COCOPA and CONAI are quick to point out the fallacies in the president's speech.

**January 26, 1998:** Francisco Labastida announces that the government has dropped 23 of its original 27 objections to the COCOPA's proposal for the implementation of the San Andrés Accords. Its remaining four objections, however, fill more than 17 pages.

**February 10, 1998:** The government's remaining list of objections to the COCOPA's proposal is delivered to the EZLN via the CONAI. The COCOPA decides not to comment on the objections until it hears a response from the EZLN.

**February 16, 1998:** During a march through the center of San Cristóbal de las Casas on the occasion of the second anniversary of the signing of the San Andrés Accords, EZLN representative *Ezequiel* warns that the rebels "will not accept any changes" to the COCOPA's original constitutional reform proposal.

**Late February, 1998:** In a lengthy communique, the EZLN reveals and rejects the "four observations" made by the federal government to the COCOPA's constitutional reform proposal.

**February 26, 1998:** The parish priest of Chenalhó, Father Michel Henri Jean Chanteau Desillieres, is arrested and immediately expelled from Mexico for "having engaged in unauthorized activities". Both the Secretariat of the Interior and the National Immigration Institute acknowledge that Chanteau has been expelled for declaring to the press that the government was responsible for the December 22nd massacre of 45 of his parishioners. Chanteau—a priest of French origin who has served the indigenous communities of Chenalhó for more than 32 years—is the eighth priest of the Diocese of San Cristóbal to have been expelled from Chiapas since 1994.

**February 28, 1998:** Chiapas governor Roberto Albores Guillén announces a "A State Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Chiapas—a thirty-page plan containing 25 key points which Albores insists will lead to peace in the region, many of which actually indicate renewed belligerence against the EZLN. The unilateral "agreement" also backs the presence of the Mexican Army in indigenous communities in order to "keep order and peace", and will prohibit certain types of demonstrations as well as authorize the use of force to prevent or repel land invasions or protests which block roadways. The plan is immediately criticized by the CONAI, as well as by a wide range of campesino, indigenous, social, and political organizations in the state.

**March 1, 1998:** Interior Minister Francisco Labastida announces the government's so-called "new strategy for peace", and says the government will unilaterally introduce a new initiative on indigenous rights and culture into Congress for its approval, regardless of the opinions or positions of the EZLN, the CONAI, or the COCOPA. In response, the EZLN issues a communiqué warning that a "renegotiation" of the San Andrés Accords would be a "mortal blow" to the process of dialogue and negotiation. The CCRI-CG of the EZLN also calls on the COCOPA to stand fast in defense of its original proposal for constitutional reforms on Indigenous Rights and Culture.

**March 12, 1998:** In a surprise move, the National Action Party (PAN) presents its own unilateral proposal for constitutional reforms on Indigenous Rights and Culture in the Mexican Senate. The PAN's initiative, as its supporters readily admit, is not designed to implement the San Andrés Accords, but rather to place the PAN's political program regarding indigenous issues into the Constitution.

**March 15, 1998:** The Federal Executive presents its counterproposal of Indigenous Rights and Culture to the Mexican Senate.

**March 17, 1998:** The National Intermediation Commission (CONAI) issues a statement sharply condemning the government's counterproposal. According to the CONAI, the government's initiative "is divorced from the San Andrés Accords" and seriously threatens the peace process.

**February - March, 1998:** The federal government launches a high-powered national and international public relations campaign in order to convince the public that its constitutional reform proposal complies with the San Andrés Accords, and that it is the EZLN which refuses to dialogue in good faith, threatens violence, and does not want peace.

At the same time, military incursions into indigenous communities in Chiapas continue; the Air Force practices bombing runs with new aircraft; the number of military flights over Zapatista

*Aguascalientes* are doubled or tripled; and heavy artillery is seen entering military bases in the Lacandon jungle for the first time. Meanwhile, the federal government steps up verbal attacks against both the COCOPA and the CONAI, accusing the former of being unnecessary, and the latter of being partial in support of the EZLN.

**April 10, 1998:** The federal army, state police, and immigration officials launch a joint operation against the community of Taniperla, the municipal center of the newly inaugurated autonomous municipality “Ricardo Flores Magón”. The operation is designed to carry out the threat of interim governor Roberto Albores Guillén, who has repeatedly insisted he will “not permit the establishment of so-called autonomous municipalities” by the Zapatistas. In the operation, nine people are detained. All are charged with “rebellion” and “usurping functions” for their supposed roles in the autonomous municipality. 12 foreign human rights observers, including two Canadians, are also detained during the raid, and are promptly expelled from Mexico under Article 33 of the Constitution. The military, meanwhile, with the help of the paramilitary group MIRA, establishes a permanent base of occupation in Taniperla.

**April 14, 1998:** The federal army, judicial police, public security forces and immigration officials launch a joint operation against the Zapatista community “10 de Abril” (in Altamirano). Several people are beaten during the operation, one of them severely; many people become sick from inhaling tear gas; and a number of women report they were sexually harassed and/or assaulted. Three Norwegian human rights observers are also detained during the operation, and are expelled from the country within 24 hours.

**May 1, 1998:** The federal army, judicial police, public security forces, and immigration agents launch a joint operation against the community of Amparo Aguatinta, center of the Autonomous Municipality “Tierra y Libertad”. 61 people are arrested, and an undetermined number are wounded. As is the case with Taniperla, Amparo Aguatinta now becomes an occupied town, controlled jointly by paramilitary groups and the federal army.

**May 10, 1998:** 40 members of the Italian human rights observation group “Todos somos indios del mundo” are expelled from Mexico, after having visited the community of Taniperla “without authorization” from the Mexican government.

**June 2, 1998:** 30 families of EZLN sympathizers in the community of Nabil, in Tenejapa, are driven out of their homes by paramilitary squads and public security police. It is reported that there are now over 16,000 internally-displaced refugees in Chiapas, almost all of them Zapatistas bases of support or members of Las Abejas.

**June 3, 1998:** The municipality of Nicolás Ruiz—a constitutional municipality, operated legally by the opposition PRD party in coalition with Zapatista bases of support—is overrun and occupied by 3,000 troops of the Mexican Army, state public security police, state and federal judicial police, and members of the paramilitary group known as “Los Chinchulines”. 167 people are detained in the operation, and many more are injured by clubs or tear gas grenades.

**June 7, 1998:** San Cristóbal bishop Samuel Ruiz García announces his resignation from the CONAI, accusing the government of closing down all possible paths for a continued role of the mediation. His

resignation is followed by the self-dissolution of the CONAI by its remaining members, who also accuse the government of provoking a war rather than seeking peace in Chiapas.

**June 10, 1998:** During a pre-dawn operation, more than 500 federal troops, judicial police, and state public security forces attack various communities of the Autonomous Municipality San Juan de la Libertad (formerly El Bosque), including its municipal headquarters. San Juan de la Libertad had long been recognized as one of the best-functioning Zapatista municipalities, with more than 90% of the communities (representing 30,000 people) in the municipality expressing adherence to the autonomous local government. During the military and police operations—which include the burning of houses, tear gas and bazooka attacks, and the use of helicopter gunships to attack civilians—a gun battle allegedly breaks out in the community of Unión Progreso, between security forces and the Zapatista bases of support defending their community. At least six Zapatistas are killed, as is one policeman. At least two other Zapatistas are reported killed by security forces in the town of Chavajeval a short time later. Nine people are wounded, and 57 are detained and taken to the Cerro Hueco state prison. All the remaining inhabitants of Chavajeval abandon their homes and head toward Oventic on foot. It is rumored that the next autonomous municipality to be violently “dismantled” by the Mexican Army will be either San Andrés (including the *Aguascalientes* of Oventic) or Chenalhó (including the community of Polhó).

**July 1, 1998:** President Zedillo pronounces an extremely vehement discourse in Simojovel, Chiapas, in which he accuses the EZLN for the country’s 1994 financial crisis, Bishop Samuel Ruiz for inciting foreign intervention, and foreign observers for violating the constitution and interfering in Mexico’s internal affairs. He threatens to penalize all “paramilitary groups” including the EZLN. The same day, a US representative, Democrat, Bobby Rush, visiting Chavajeval on an “authorized” human rights tour of the area, strongly condemns Zedillo’s speech, threatens to review the military bilateral accords which he acknowledges have been violated, and demands the UN intervention for humanitarian purposes.

**July 2, 1998:** The speech is widely condemned by the press, including *The Economist*, national and international NGO’s, and *all* opposition congressmen, including the PRI Senator for Chiapas.

**July 17 and 22, 1998:** Marcos sends two Communiques. The first is to break his silence and dismiss the rumors of his death. The second calls for a national consultation, organized by the Civil Society and COCOPA, to find a solution to the long-lasting crisis.

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*L'Express*

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*Los Angeles Times* (US)

*Masiosare (Mexico City)*

*Nexas (Mexico)*

*Proceso (Mexico)*

*Reforma (Mexico City)*

*The Economist (GB)*

*The New York Times (US)*

*The Wall Street Journal (US)*

*The Washington Post (US)*

*Time Magazine (US)*



## VITA

William Francisco Arrocha Delli-Sante

**Place and year of birth:** Mexico City, 1963.

### Education

PhD. Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, 1998.

MA. Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, 1994.

Diploma in US and Canadian Studies, Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México (ITAM), Mexico City, 1992.

BA in International Relations, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM), Mexico City, 1990.

### Awards & Fellowships

1998. Queen's Thesis Bursary

1997. Queen's Graduate Award

1996. Queen's Graduate Fellowship

1993. The Government of Canada Award

**Languages:** English, French and Spanish. Cross-cultural background.

### Professional Experience

1996-1997. Assistant to Panellist for the Binational Panel Pursuant to the Provisions of Article 1904 of the North American Free Trade Agreement. Case: Mex-96-1904-03.

1996-1997. Assistant to Coordinator for Queen's University Studies in National and International Development (SNID).

1994-1996. Teaching Assistant, Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario

1991-1993. Political Analyst and Assistant Public Affairs Officer at the Canadian Embassy, Mexico City.

1991-1992. Chief of Advisors for the Under-Secretary for General Planning and Management, Mexican Secretariat of Commerce and Industrial Development (SECOFI)..

1985-1991. Economic, Political and Development Tutor and Consultant for Mitsubishi Corp. and Tokyo Marine Ltd., Mexico City.

1987. Production Assistant for the Documentary produced by NHK Japan, for the *II United Nations Congress on Urban Problems* held in Tokyo in 1987.

1988-1989. Research Assistant, UNAM, Mexico City,

1985-1986. Personal Interpreter for the Secretary of State for Energy, Mines and Natural

Resources, Mexico City.

### **Congresses, Seminars and Workshops**

Seminar titled *Open Regionalism: Strengthening the Net*, Vancouver, BC, January 30 and 31, 1998. Organized by the Institute of Asian Research at UBC, Buttedahl R&D Associates and the Chilean Embassy. My presentation focussed on the human and national security impacts of the 1994 Mexican financial crisis.

II Joint International Studies Association (ISA) and the Asociación Mexicana de Estudios Internacionales (AMEI) convention on *Global Cooperation: The Americas at the end of the XX Century*, held in Manzanillo, Mexico, from 11 to 13 December, 1997. My presentation focussed on a critical review of the traditional notions on national security.

Workshop on *Analysis in Foreign Affairs*, Ottawa, September 11-13, 1997. Organized by the Intelligence Assessment Secretariat (IAS) of the Privy Council Office of Canada.

38<sup>th</sup> Annual ISA Convention held in Toronto, Canada from 18 to 22 March, 1997. My presentation dealt with the political and social limits and reaches of regionalism.

Colloquium in honour of the 50th anniversary of the Centre for International Relations (CRI, UNAM) held at Mexico City on October 1993.

Ist joint International Studies Association (ISA) and its Mexican counterpart, AMEI, held in Acapulco, Mexico, January 1993, My focus was on the new perspectives for Mexican-Canadian relations after NAFTA.

IV Mexican Association of International Studies (AMEI) convention held at Puebla, Puebla, Mexico, 1989.

### **Lectures**

October 1998. Lecture sponsored by Professor Cathy Conaghan on the 1994 Zapatista upheaval, Queen's University.

February 1996. Lecture sponsored by Dr. Paz Buttedahl on Mexico's security dilemmas after the 1994 Chiapas conflict, Queen's University.

February 1996. Lecture sponsored by Professor Abbey Bakan on Latin American-US relations, Queen's University.

March 1994. Lecture sponsored by professor Collin Leys on the Chiapas 1994 upheaval, Queen's University.

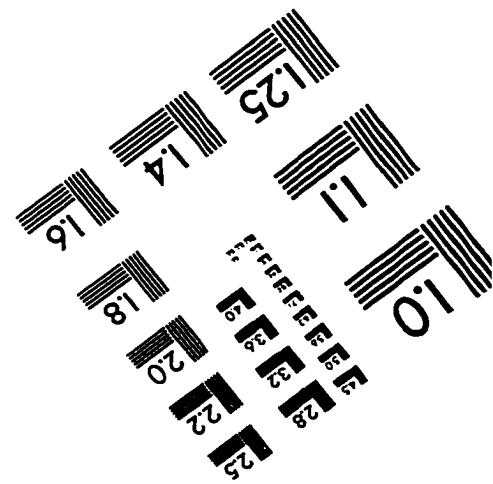
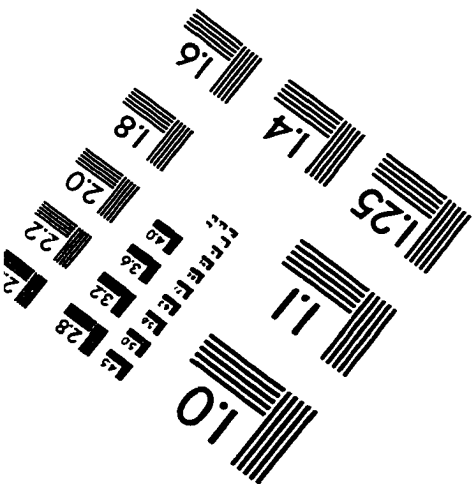
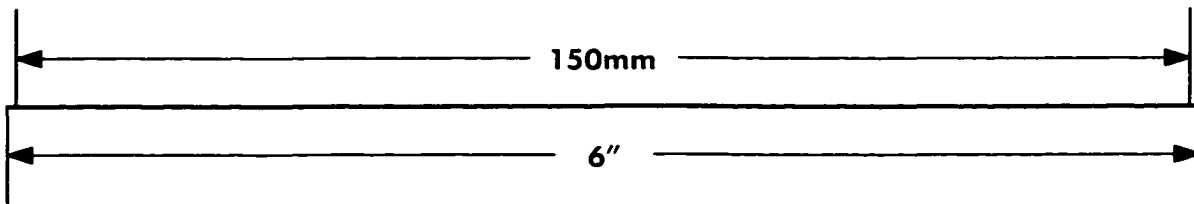
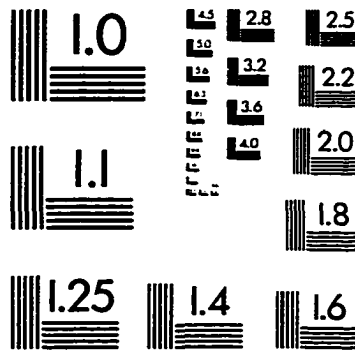
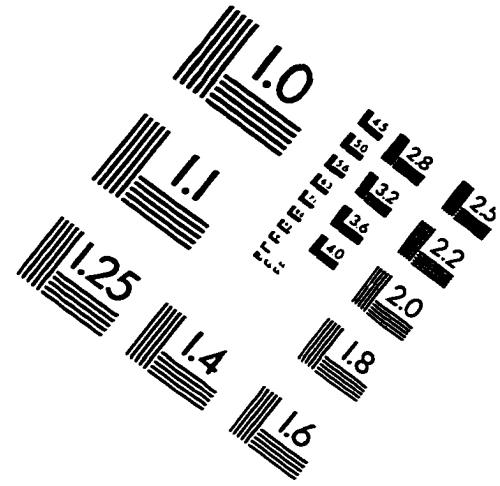
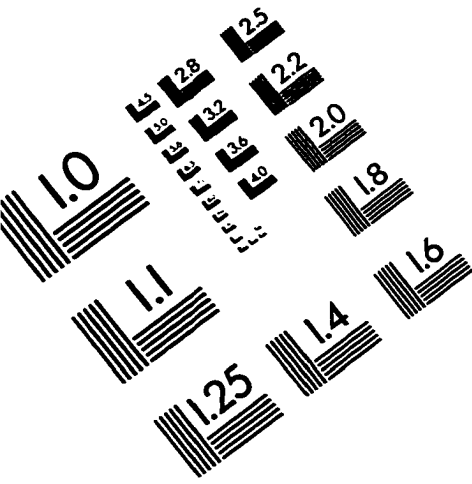
### **Publications**

Arrocha, William F. "El Estudio de las Relaciones Internacionales en Canadá", in *Revista Mexicana de Relaciones Internacionales*, Mexico: UNAM, Spring, 1992.

### **Professional Memberships**

International Studies Association (ISA) & Asociación Mexicana de Estudios Internacionales (AMEI).

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