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**Conflict Resolution Through International Intervention:  
A Comparative Study of Cambodia and El Salvador**

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## **“Peaceful Conflict Resolution Through International Intervention: A Comparative Study of Cambodia and El Salvador”<sup>1</sup>**

Gerardo L. Munck and Chetan Kumar

As the Cold War has receded, it has left behind a world system characterized by two divergent trends. On the one hand, as the two superpowers have withdrawn their security umbrellas, a host of ethnic and territorial conflicts have sprouted around the globe. On the other hand, as former rival blocs now create alliances, international mechanisms for the peaceful resolution of contentious issues have proliferated.<sup>2</sup> A central concern of our times, then, is whether, and under what circumstances, these new mechanisms will be successful in dealing with the disorderly aspects of the new world “order.”

A guiding thought in this article is that, just as the problems the world now faces escape old molds; so, too, must inquiry about these new problems rely on novel approaches. The analysis of conflict resolution, indeed, is an area of concern in which some of the themes and insights from the fields of international relations and comparative politics can be brought together. For a long time these fields developed with little cross-fertilization. But, increasingly, there is an important degree of overlap between the comparative literature on “transitions from authoritarian rule,” with its emphasis on negotiations and pacts, and the international relations literature on conflict resolution. Obviously, the one fundamental divergence between these two bodies of literature has been the former’s emphasis on “domestic, internal factors.”<sup>3</sup> Yet, even here, there appears to be a greater confluence of interests, especially due to the work of a number of comparativists who have acknowledged the importance of international factors.<sup>4</sup>

This article, then, seeks to contribute to this dialogue between specialists in international relations and comparative politics by analyzing recent developments in El Salvador and Cambodia. In these two cases international intervention has played a central role in the attempt to resolve a long-standing civil conflict, yet the two countries have fared quite differently in their attempts to implement their respective peace accords. While steady progress was made in the Salvadoran case in the year following the signing of a peace accord, over a comparable period, the Cambodian peace process has, for all practical purposes, been undermined. Thus, an explanation of these two contrasting experiences can provide some useful insights concerning the conditions under which future international intervention is likely to be successful in resolving conflicts.

Methodologically, the value of comparing two cases with different outcomes is all the greater given the similarities in the form of international intervention. In the first place, comparative analysis is facilitated due to the practically identical chronological sequence of events. Civil war started in late 1978 in Cambodia and in early 1981 in El Salvador, and in both cases it continued throughout the 1980s until peace accords were signed, more or less simultaneously, in both Cambodia (October 1991) and El Salvador (January 1992).

The similar timing of the move toward peace was not coincidental. Indeed, similar forces appeared to be at work. Both El Salvador and Cambodia represented cases of conflicts that, given their international security

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1. This article extends previous efforts by the co-authors to understand the conditions for conflict resolution. Munck’s work has dealt with the Salvadoran case, Gerardo L. Munck, “Beyond Electoralism in El Salvador: Conflict Resolution Through Negotiated Compromise,” *Third World Quarterly* 14, no. 1 (1993). Kumar’s work has focused on the role of the United Nations in facilitating win-win solutions. Paul F. Diehl and Chetan Kumar, “Mutual Benefits from International Intervention: New Roles for United Nations Peacekeeping Forces,” *Bulletin of Peace Proposals* 22, no. 4 (1991). We would like to thank Paul Diehl and Stephen P. Cohen for very helpful comments.
  2. See James Rosenau, *Turbulence in World Politics: A Theory of Continuity and Change* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991).
  3. Guillermo O’Donnell and Philippe Schmitter, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule. Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 18.
  4. Laurence Whitehead, for example, acknowledges that “In general, the literature analyzing democratization in contemporary Latin America has rated international factors as of secondary importance, but the transformations of Eastern Europe and developments in Nicaragua and Panama indicate the need for some reconsideration of this view.” Laurence Whitehead, “The Alternatives to ‘Liberal Democracy’: A Latin American Perspective,” in David Held, ed., *Prospects for Democracy*, a special issue of *Political Studies* XL (1992): 149.

ramifications, elicited more than passing interest from both regional as well as global actors. Subsequently, with the retrenchment of both the United States and the former Soviet Union from their Cold War engagements, several of the conflicting parties in Cambodia and El Salvador could no longer serve as superpowers proxies.<sup>5</sup> The easing of Cold War tensions, then, was a crucial factor in improving the conditions for peace inside both countries. Changes within the US foreign policy establishment, associated with the cooling of Cold War tensions, furthermore, allowed the United States to support a greater United Nations role in the resolution of civil conflicts.<sup>6</sup> In fact, the active US support for UN initiatives has enabled the latter to play a very visible role in the negotiations process as well as in the implementation of the resulting peace accords in both El Salvador and Cambodia. In sum, these two cases are quite representative of both the challenges and opportunities brought about by the end of the Cold War.

As remarkable as these parallel developments may be, the most striking fact remains that, in spite of these similarities, there is remarkable divergence between the two cases in the actual process of the implementation of the peace accords. In El Salvador the peace process has advanced fairly steadily, despite setbacks and rescheduling of the various timetables set in their peace accord. In Cambodia, on the other hand, the process of implementing the peace accord has run into difficulties that appear to be intractable, and might even derail the accords, with the possibility of a return to the situation of civil conflict.<sup>7</sup> The aim of this article, then, is to uncover those factors that account for the steady progress of the peace process in the Salvadoran case in contrast to the uncertain status of the Cambodian case. Given the similarities between the two cases, the factors accounting for these differing outcomes, as far as the actual implementation of the accord is concerned, should provide crucial pointers about the conditions in which international intervention will be successful.<sup>8</sup> To advance this comparative analysis, however, clarification of the study's framework is in order.

#### Civil Conflicts and International Intervention: Negotiating and Implementing Peace Accords

It is in the nature of "civil conflicts" that adversaries seek a victory entailing the unequivocal defeat of their opponent.<sup>9</sup> The parties to these all-out conflicts, in other words, are driven by the possibility of obtaining a win-lose outcome, in which their side will be better off and the other side worse off. Because of this, two common outcomes of conflicts in less extreme circumstances are unlikely to obtain. Given the goals of the parties, both a Pareto-optimum outcome in which none of the sides comes out worse off and at least one side comes out better off, and a Pareto-malimum outcome, in which none of the sides is better off and at least one side is worse off, are bound to be unstable. A relative gain might lead the party with the advantage to seek an ever further gain. In terms of the basic choices faced by warring parties, that is, to continue to fight (the military solution) or to opt for negotiations (the political solution), the military option might become even more attractive and offers for negotiation might be turned down or used, duplicitously, to further weaken the adversary.

As civil conflicts become stalemated, given a relative parity of forces among the conflicting parties, however, the prospects of a peaceful or negotiated settlement to the conflict increase.<sup>10</sup> The realization that the pursuance of a military option is not about to result in a win-lose outcome usually results in a change of perception of the relative costs of fighting or seeking a negotiated settlement. In other words, when a "mutually

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<sup>5</sup>. See Melvin Goodman, ed., *The End of Superpower Conflict in the Third World* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1992), Chapters 3 and 5.

<sup>6</sup>. James Rosenau, *The United Nations in a Turbulent World* (International Peace Academy Occasional Paper, 1991).

<sup>7</sup>. These assessments are based on developments through February 1993.

<sup>8</sup>. This study primarily employs the method of difference, as discussed by comparativists such as Arend Lijphart, "Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method," *American Political Science Review* 65, no. 3 (1971): 682-93; and Alexander George and Timothy J. McKeown, "Case Studies and Theories of Organizational Decision-Making," in Robert F. Coulam and Richard A. Smith, eds., *Advances in Information Processing in Organizations*, vol. 2 (Greenwich, CT: JAI Press, 1985).

<sup>9</sup>. The term "civil conflict," as used in this paper, refers to a violent conflict between two or more parties within the boundaries of the same state, in which the goals of the conflicting parties are stated in the context of that particular state's polity. The 1983 United States intervention in Grenada, for instance, would not be an instance of civil conflict. This definition, however, does not preclude consideration of those cases where civil conflict has trans-boundary ramifications, or where one or more of the conflicting parties is performing proxy roles for external agents.

<sup>10</sup>. Conflicts that are "resolved" or terminated through one party's military victory are not considered here.

hurting stalemate” is reached, the perception on the part of the antagonists that the costs of the military status quo begin to override the benefits for both parties, opens the way for a political settlement.<sup>11</sup>

The perception that the conflict has led to a lose-lose outcome, however, does not necessarily lead to a peace process. This is because of the fear on the part of both the parties that, should they lower their guard and begin to disarm, the other side might use the peace process as a cover for renegeing on its commitments. By taking advantage of its opponent’s weakness, the party that defects from the negotiations could rekindle the possibility of a win-lose outcome in its favor. Thus, a mutually harmful military confrontation always remains in the cards. This situation resembles a Chicken game.<sup>12</sup> Both players clearly have an incentive to cooperate, that is, to negotiate. But, as Michael Taylor argues, because an important feature of this game is that a fully cooperative outcome is unstable, “one can expect any cooperation to be fragile.”<sup>13</sup> A stalemated military conflict, hence, while embodying a lose-lose situation, does not necessarily guarantee an equilibrium that could foster a stable peace process. It represents a necessary but not a sufficient condition for the beginning of negotiations.

As the comparative literature has sought to show, in this situation it is possible that a third, or bridging, domestic actor may provide the necessary assurances that will reinforce the cooperative option. In the bargaining process between authoritarian rulers and the societal opposition, indeed, such a role was played by King Juan Carlos I in the Spanish transition and President Karamanlis in the Greek transition. The problem remains that in most cases such actors are simply not to be found. But in those cases, as Whitehead writes, “In the absence of adequate internal bridging institutions or actors, there are international agencies, such as the United Nations, the Organization of American States (OAS), the European Community and the Contadora Group, which could act as a ‘functional equivalent’ for the missing domestic actor.”<sup>14</sup> This idea, which serves to bring together some central concerns in the international relations and comparative politics fields, is certainly worth pursuing.

“International intervention,” in this framework, advances the prospects of peaceful conflict resolution by providing guarantees that will counteract the instability and fragility built into the game of Chicken.<sup>15</sup> More

11. This discussion draws upon the work of Stuart Nagel, *Policy Evaluation Methods* (New York, NY: Macmillan, 1992). This argument also parallels the emphasis on pacts in the comparative literature. As Guillermo O’Donnell and Philippe Schmitter state, pacts are likely when two parties “can neither do without each other, nor unilaterally impose their preferred solution on each other if they are to satisfy their respective divergent interests.” O’Donnell and Schmitter, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule*, 38. Di Palma adds to this, showing how political actors with conflicting interests have an incentive to accept a pact when otherwise “their immediate prospect is a reciprocal stalemate, fed by recalcitrance and polarization, and without visible exit.” Guiseppe Di Palma, *To Craft Democracies: An Essay on Democratic Transitions* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1990), 36.

12. The Chicken game, in the context of this text, can be represented in the following terms:

| Government       | Opposition       |              |
|------------------|------------------|--------------|
|                  | <i>Negotiate</i> | <i>Fight</i> |
| <i>Negotiate</i> | 3,3              | 2,4          |
| <i>Fight</i>     | 4,2              | 1,1          |

13. Michael Taylor, *The Possibility of Cooperation* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 39.

14. Laurence Whitehead, “Democracy by Convergence and Southern Europe: A Comparative Politics Perspective,” in Geoffrey Pridham, ed., *Encouraging Democracy: The International Context of Regime Transition in Southern Europe* (Leicester, London: Leicester University Press, 1991), 54-5. For a parallel discussion in the international relations literature, see Thomas Princen, *Intermediaries in International Conflict* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992).

15. The term “international intervention” refers to a multilateral intervention, or an intervention by a regional or global international organization, in a civil conflict. The intervention’s expressed purpose should be that of obtaining a negotiated resolution of the conflict, and not the forceful imposition of the goals of any one of the intervening parties. Good examples of the kinds of intervention encompassed in the definition are the UN interventions in Cambodia, El Salvador, and Namibia, as well as the multilateral West African intervention in Liberia. This definition would thus preclude, for instance, the 1989 US intervention in Panama, or the 1991 Indian intervention in the Maldives, as well as all other unilateral interventions. However, an exception would be made in those instances where the purpose of unilateral intervention is the restoration of peaceful conditions, and where the intervention is carried out in collaboration with, or in support of, various international bodies. A good example of such intervention is Italy’s recent role in brokering the peace accords in Mozambique.

As comparativists have pointed out, these forms of intervention, even if violent, have also played a role in certain cases of transition from authoritarian to democratic regimes. See Alfred Stepan, “Paths Toward Redemocratization: Theoretical and Comparative Considerations,” in Guillermo O’Donnell, Philippe Schmitter and Laurence Whitehead, eds., *Transitions From Authoritarian Rule: Comparative Perspectives* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), and Laurence Whitehead,

specifically, the role of international intervention is to allay the fears of military vulnerability that the antagonistic parties might have, in the event of their participation in the negotiations. This can be done by guaranteeing an unbiased implementation of key steps such as the disarming and downsizing of military forces and the all crucial electoral process, whereby former military foes confront each other on a new, electoral-political, field. The critical importance of these guarantees are best understood in negative terms. If there are obvious benefits of a negotiated settlement over a military stalemate, thus, without such intervention the tendency to seek the best possible option would continue to push parties into a lose-lose situation. Given the uncertain equilibrium represented by the cooperative strategy in the chicken game, in other words, international intervention can provide the missing condition that makes the emergence of a win-win outcome as a stable option to antagonists in a civil war. Where a third, or bridging, domestic actor is not available, international intervention is a necessary condition for bringing the parties together to sign a peace accord.

The contribution of international intervention does not end with the signing of a peace accord. Indeed, its role in the first stage of any peace process, that is, bringing the parties to the negotiating table and having them sign a peace accord, is contingent on the expectation of its role in a second stage, that is, the implementation of the peace accord. But the successful implementation of a peace accord depends upon other factors as well. It is necessary to underline, then, that far from being assured of being successfully implemented, a peace accord can be undone by a whole range of destabilizing factors. In retrospect, indeed, the implementation phase of a peace accord appears in many cases to be even more trouble-ridden than the negotiation of accord. A central concern of this article, then, is to show how the successful implementation of a peace accord depends upon the continued perception by the parties to the accord that the peace process represents a win-win outcome. If sometimes not framed in these terms, the literature in international relations and comparative politics does highlight various factors that are likely to have a significant impact on the implementation of a peace accord. These shall be the ones addressed in this article.

A first factor is the *number, inclusiveness, and cohesion of the parties* to the peace accord. This factor is central, as bargaining theory shows, inasmuch as disputes between two broadly inclusive or representative parties that are able to exercise firm control over their followers or membership are more easily coordinated. The perception of a win-win outcome, which made the signing of the peace accord possible, is more likely to be maintained. Any changes in these factors, furthermore, is likely to undermine the fragile win-win equilibrium and hinder the smooth implementation of an accord.<sup>16</sup>

Second, the *number and interests of external parties* affect the prospects of successful implementation inasmuch as the greater the number of external parties, the harder it will be to maintain the balance that allowed for the signing of the peace accord.<sup>17</sup> In addition to the coordination problems that result from the simple number of external actors, changes in the interests of external actors can alter the initial conditions that allowed for the signing of the peace accord, strengthening the perception on the part of one of the signatories that a win-lose outcome in its favor is possible. This type of perception, no doubt, is bound to destabilize the peace process.

Third, the *transitional institutional framework*, as provided by the peace accord, affects the implementation stage in terms of the role of the intervening party as well as that of the parties to the conflict. Concerning the first, when the envisioned international intervention is fairly limited in scale and linked with very pointed objectives, the likelihood that the intervening party will be seen as impartial, a prerequisite for effective international intervention, is increased. Concerning the second point, the implementation of a peace accord is

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“The Imposition of Democracy,” in Abraham Lowenthal, ed., *Exporting Democracy: The United States in Latin America* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991).

<sup>16</sup>. As stressed in bargaining theory, particularly as applied to corporate pacts, the existence of well defined collective actors with a leadership both able to speak for a rank-and-file element and able to enforce conditions agreed to with other parties, is a precondition for any negotiation to take place and be enforced. Here we are concerned with the characteristics of these actors that affect the likelihood of the signed accord being implemented. The reason for dyadic disputes being more amenable to resolution is that an increase in the number of parties to a dispute leads to an increase in the number of conflicting interests that need to be coordinated in the negotiation and implementation phase. The destabilizing tendencies are, accordingly, increased.

<sup>17</sup>. The term “external party” is used to refer to the parties that were initially involved in the conflict, and not to the mediating party. For example, while in Cambodia the external mediator is the United Nations, the external parties include China, Thailand, and Vietnam.

more likely to be successful when institutional mechanisms are provided for regular contact between signatories to the peace accord. This allows for the containment and gradual overcoming of the natural distrust among parties, reinforcing the guarantees, provided by international intervention, that no party will be worse off. Both points are crucial, then, inasmuch as they determine the ability for mid-course corrections, which can help resolve unforeseen problems in a way that prevents the derailing of the entire peace process.

Finally, the *actors' evolving perceptions of electoral chances* affects the prospects of successful implementation of a signed accord because the security of the major actors, in terms of not feeling condemned to the position of permanent outsider in the future electoral game, reduces the volatility of the situation and increases the likelihood of the institutionalization of conflict.<sup>18</sup> Of course, ultimately, the success of international intervention for peaceful conflict resolution can be measured in terms of the institutionalization of conflict through the consolidation of a democratic system. Success, in other words, removes the initial need for international intervention.

### Stage 1: Bringing the Parties to the Negotiating Table and Signing an Accord

Turning to the case studies of El Salvador and Cambodia, it is appropriate to start with the first stage of the peace process, centered around bringing the parties to the negotiating table and having them sign an accord. Starting with the origins of the civil wars, then, the next section shows how it is possible to detect certain quite distinct phases on the way to a negotiated settlement. The Cambodian case is considered first; thereafter El Salvador is analyzed; and, finally, the two cases are compared in light of the framework provided above.

#### The Cambodian Case

The beginning of the Cambodian civil conflict dates back to the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia in 1978 and its effort to install a client government in Phnom Penh.<sup>19</sup> The defeated Khmer Rouge withdrew into the jungles of neighboring Thailand, from where it sought to regain its military capabilities and wage war against the new government. The Khmer Rouge benefited from the backing of the Thai military, due to the latter's fears about Vietnam-led Communist expansion in Southeast Asia, and subsequently received the support of China. This assistance encouraged the Khmer Rouge to envision a military victory. But the Khmer Rouge's gains did not go unanswered. The Soviet Union, in particular, weighed in on the side of Vietnam and its Cambodian proxy, considerably strengthening the Phnom Penh government. Backed by external actors, both the Khmer Rouge and the government in Phnom Penh envisioned win-lose opportunities.

Cold War rivalries only helped to intensify military efforts. Soviet support for Vietnam and the Cambodian regime led the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), which sought to resist what was seen as a Soviet threat to the region, to pitch in alongside Thailand and China. The United States sided with the ASEAN and the Chinese. US involvement and the genocidal history of the Khmer Rouge led to the latter's incorporation into a wider tripartite body, the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea (CGDK).<sup>20</sup> Thus, even though the bulk of fighting was carried out between the Khmer Rouge and the Vietnamese-backed government in Phnom Penh, the CGDK put the Khmer Rouge in association with the organizations led by the former ruler of Cambodia, Prince Norodom Sihanouk, and by Son Sann, a US-favored moderate. In the meantime, the internationalization of the conflict kept both party's hopes of a win-lose outcome alive.

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18. The democratization literature has also argued that the process of pact-making sometimes calls for guarantees being extended to certain parties in return for their willingness to negotiate with their opponents and back political solutions to conflictive situations. See O'Donnell and Schmitter, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule*, 28-32, 69. Of course, electoral laws and constitutional structures will also determine whether power-sharing and respect for minority rights are likely to result, and whether the losing party will have a realistic chance of coming to power at a future date. See Matthew Soberg Shugart, "Guerrillas and Elections: An Institutional Perspective on the Costs of Conflict and Competition," *International Studies Quarterly* 36, no. 2 (1992): 121-52.

19. The following discussion draws upon Daniel S. Papp, "Soviet and American Peacemaking Efforts in Regional Conflicts in Asia: Afghanistan and Cambodia," in Melvin A. Goodman, ed., *The End of Superpower Conflict in the Third World* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1992).

20. See John McAuliff and Mary Byrne McDonnell, "The Cambodian Stalemate: America's Obstructionist Role in Indochina," *World Policy Journal* (Winter 1989-1990).



Subsequently, a series of domestic as well as external factors led to a stalemate and the emergence of a classic lose-lose situation. But the way for a lose-lose situation was hardly a straightforward matter. A series of victories of the Phnom Penh government over the Khmer Rouge in the mid-1980s, led the former to become convinced that it had contained its rival. At the same time, Gorbachev's attempt to improve relations with both China and the United States translated into Soviet pressure on Vietnam to gradually withdraw from Cambodia. This pressure, then, along with the economic troubles faced by the Vietnamese within their own country and the conviction that the Khmer Rouge was no longer a threat, led the Vietnamese to start withdrawing troops from Cambodia.

The withdrawal of Vietnamese troops completed in mid-1989, however, led to the unexpected reinvigoration of the Khmer Rouge that launched a new offensive against the government in Phnom Penh during the next year and, in turn, triggered a new round of external initiatives. The specter of a new Khmer Rouge government created an uproar in the West. In particular, the United States, no longer burdened by Cold War concerns, took strong action against the Khmer Rouge. It pressured China to stop all aid to the Khmer Rouge and China, in large part due to its effort to restore its tarnished image in the wake of the Tiananmen Square massacre, complied. The United States also put pressure on Thailand, which began to clamp down on Khmer Rouge bases in its territory. Furthermore, the United States withdrew recognition from the CGDK in the United Nations and even promised humanitarian aid to the government in Phnom Penh. As a result, a revitalized Phnom Penh government was able to fight the Khmer Rouge to a standstill. Following strong bids at military victory, the two sides finally appeared to be locked into a stalemated position.

With the cementing of a relative parity of forces among the conflicting parties, the prospects of a peaceful settlement to the conflict increased. The evaporation of any realistic sense that the war could be won by either side changed the actor's strategic calculus. The status quo, that is, the continuation of fighting, became increasingly costly to sustain, increasing the incentive to negotiate a way out of the war. But if the move from a win-lose to lose-lose situation made negotiations more likely in the context of Cambodia, it did not represent a sufficient condition. Indeed, it would not be until a serious international intervention was launched, that the peace appeared to be at hand.

International intervention mainly took the form of UN action. First, Australian Foreign Minister Gareth Evans proposed that the Cambodian stalemate could be resolved by UN intervention along the lines of the one implemented in Namibia. Rapidly, the United Nations took up this suggestion and started to broker a year-long negotiation process. By October 1991, the peace accord was finalized and signed by the concerned parties. Under the plan, the Phnom Penh regime would give way to an interim governing council consisting of members from the three factions of the CGDK (including the Khmer Rouge) as well as from the Vietnam-installed government in Phnom Penh. The primary function of the governing council would not be to perform any legislative or administrative tasks, but to serve as a symbol of Cambodian sovereignty. In the interim, the day-to-day administration of Cambodia would be carried out by the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC), which would also supervise the schedule whereby the warring factions would disarm and prepare to contest an election. The UN's role would continue into the administration and supervision of elections. Following the elections, the legitimately elected government of Cambodia would take office to replace the Governing Council.

#### The Salvadoran Case

As in the case of Cambodia, the conflict in El Salvador went through a series of distinct phases. The origins of civil war can be dated from the failure on the part of the reformist military Junta set up through an October 1979 coup to contain the activities of death squads or, more precisely, to the "final offensive" launched by a leftist political-military front, FDR-FMLN (Democratic Revolutionary Front-Farabundo Martí Front for National Liberation), in January 1981.<sup>21</sup> The guerrillas sought to overthrow the government before President Ronald

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<sup>21</sup>. The following discussion draws upon William M. LeoGrande, "After the Battle of San Salvador," in Kenneth M. Coleman and George C. Herring, eds., *Understanding the Central American Crisis* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 1992); Terry Lynn Karl, "El Salvador's Negotiated Revolution," *Foreign Affairs* 71, no. 2 (1992): 147-64; Enrique Baloyra, "Salvaging El Salvador,"

Reagan took office and aid started to arrive in large quantity. This offensive failed and soon US aid helped improve the Salvadoran military's capabilities. The guerrillas were able to stage a new offensive that put them in a strong position in 1983. But, by the mid-1980s, they more or less accepted the fact that a standstill had been reached on the battlefield. With the prospects of revolution diminishing, the guerrillas started to propose a negotiated settlement to the conflict; but the Reagan administration, in particular, refused to allow its allies to engage in negotiations. An outright military defeat of the FDR-FMLN was the only acceptable goal the United States would support.<sup>22</sup> With the Salvadoran military and the United States still envisioning the possibility of winning the war, the option of negotiations never flourished.

Starting in 1987, however, certain important changes removed the obstacles to negotiations, as the costs of continued fighting increased for both sides. On the side of the opposition, the decision by its political allies in the FDR to form the Democratic Convergence (*Convergencia Democrática*) and to retake the path of institutional politics, had a profound effect on the FMLN.<sup>23</sup> It increased awareness of the possible loss of prestige and support that would ensue from the continuation of a civil war with little prospects of success. If winning appeared out of the cards since the mid-1980s, now the costs of continuing to fight were increasingly felt. On the side of the government, there emerged an increasingly confident right, under the new leadership of the relatively moderate and US-educated conservative Alfredo Cristiani, the right-wing National Republican Alliance (*Alianza Republicana Nacionalista*—ARENA) won the 1988 legislative elections and then succeeded in electing Cristiani to the presidency in 1989. The good electoral performance of ARENA gave the right a greater confidence in their ability to operate successfully in some future democratic system. As the continuation of war, now firmly stalemated for some time, impinged upon their ability to further their economic interests, the ARENA-led government began to see the positive side of ending the civil war.

There remained the question of the military; that is, whether the civilian government of Cristiani could control the military. There could be no doubt that the military would be a big loser in any negotiated settlement. Thus, much depended on the position of the United States, which in many ways had created the Salvadoran military. In this regard, a shift in the US position would be crucial to the equation of forces within El Salvador. As the Soviets started to withdraw from Central America, after Gorbachev's rise to power,<sup>24</sup> and following the move toward more pragmatic positions associated with the end of the Reagan administration, the stakes of the regional conflict were so reduced that the United States started to support, if reluctantly, a negotiated settlement in El Salvador. The Salvadoran military had no realistic option but to go along with US wishes.

In sum, as both main participants in the civil conflict perceived that a stalemate had been reached, the costs of the status quo began to override the benefits of a political settlement. Negotiations began in late 1989, but they were rapidly scuttled by the actions of both the army and the FMLN. In the absence of a domestic party that could bridge the two sides, the lack of international intervention presented a crucial handicap. Indeed, it was only after the FMLN contacted the United Nations, and the government agreed for the very first time to outside mediation, that a formal negotiation process was begun under UN auspices in April 1990.<sup>25</sup> The UN-mediated

*Journal of Democracy* 3, no. 2 (1992): 70-80; and Joseph Tulchin and Gary Bland, eds., *Is There a Transition to Democracy in El Salvador?* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1992).

22. Following Christian Democrat Napoleon Duarte's victory in the May 1984 presidential race, certain prospects for peace did emerge. As a reformist, Duarte proposed a meeting between the government and the FDR-FMLN. In October 1984, a dialogue began in the town of La Palma. But the United States, especially after Reagan's 1984 reelection, pushed for an escalation of the war and clearly sought to undermine the peace process.
23. As in the case of ASEAN with regard to Cambodia, the first tentative peace initiatives were regional. The formation of the Democratic Convergence, indeed, was made possible by the Central American Peace Plan or Esquipulas II accord, signed by the elected presidents of Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica in August 1987. On the regional initiatives, see Latin American Studies Association, "Extraordinary Opportunities and New Risks: Final Report of the LASA Commission on Compliance with the Central American Peace Accord," *LASA Forum* 19, no. 1 (1988); and Jack Child, *The Central American Peace Process, 1983-1991* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1992).
24. Jan S. Adams, *A Foreign Policy in Transition. Moscow's Retreat from Central America and the Caribbean, 1985-1992* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1992).
25. Negotiations between the Cristiani government and the FMLN started in September 1989, but the army attempted to disrupt the talks rapidly, a move immediately responded to with a new offensive by the FMLN. At this point, the United Nations stepped in. In early 1990, it organized secret meetings between the government and the FMLN that led to the beginning of formal talks in April 1990.

negotiations advanced gradually through a series of well-defined stages until, after a full twenty one months, the 'Final Agreement on Peace' was signed in Mexico City in January 1992.<sup>26</sup> A formal cease-fire was to come into effect and, thereafter, UN observers would conduct an arms inventory leading up to the destruction of all the insurgents' weapons in the final two weeks of October. By 31 October 1992, the demobilization of the FMLN and their transformation into a legal political body was to be completed. The army, which had increased in size from 16 thousand to 56 thousand in the 1980s, would be reduced by half over a period of two years, while several of its units were simply dissolved. Furthermore, officers guilty of human rights abuses would be purged; a new National Civil Police, which former guerrillas were eligible to join, was to be created; and land occupied by peasants in rebel-held areas would remain in their hands. Due to the already functioning electoral system, aside from the reforms which would allow the FMLN to become a party, the existing electoral schedule was maintained. The former military adversaries would first meet in an electoral contest in 1994.

#### The Cases of Cambodia and El Salvador Compared

In comparing the events leading up to the signing of the peace accords in the cases of Cambodia and El Salvador, certain conclusions can be drawn. Initially, in both cases, the involvement of external actors allowed at least one of the parties to the conflict to retain the expectation of obtaining a win-lose outcome in their favor. In Cambodia, external involvement was more complex and fluctuating, and allowed both sides to envision a military victory. In El Salvador the opposition had accepted that the war was not able to be won, but the fighting continued, primarily due to United States backing of the Salvadoran military. As long as one party to the conflict saw the possibility of military victory, the fighting continued.

The move to a lose-lose situation was quite complex, but in both cases was made possible by the reduction of Cold War tensions. If, in both cases, external parties had an important role in the origins and continuance of the civil war, their change in position later on helped cement the perception that the military option ceased to be realistic. Gradually, as the perception that a stalemated situation had developed on the combat field gradually took hold, the parties to the long conflict began to conceive of their interaction in lose-lose terms. There began to be an incentive to seek a peaceful resolution to the civil war. But if negotiations began to appear as an appealing win-win proposition, the fighting parties could not solve the problem of providing guarantees. After a prolonged war, they were bound to distrust "the other side." No domestic actor was in a position to serve as an impartial intermediary.

The failure of domestic parties to establish conditions for the beginning of negotiations provided an opening for international intervention. With the increasing willingness of the superpowers to allow the United Nations greater initiative, the United Nations was ready to assume an important role in brokering a peace accord in both El Salvador and Cambodia. Once the warring parties saw the need for international intervention, and accepted the United Nations as a broker, a key obstacle to the peaceful resolution of the conflict was lifted. Thereafter, in both cases, the main contribution of international intervention revolved around containing the mutual distrust of the parties involved that had sought to militarily defeat each other for a long time, and presenting proposals that could be accepted by both parties. Due to its image as an impartial body, the United Nations lowered the risks of entering and remaining in the peace process. In short, it facilitated the stabilization of the uncertain equilibrium represented by the win-win outcome, resolving the primary difficulty of the Chicken game.

There were differences between the two cases. Most notably, there were important variations in the substance of the peace accords<sup>27</sup> and, if at the time these differences may have appeared less significant than the

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From the beginning, the UN Secretary General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, oversaw the negotiation process. The role of the United Nations became more important after the October 1990 agreement by the negotiating parties that allowed the UN Secretary General's representative, Alvaro de Soto, to put forward his own proposals. Karl, "El Salvador's Negotiated Revolution," 154-55.

26. On the negotiations, see Gerardo L. Munck, "Beyond Electoralism in El Salvador: Conflict Resolution Through Negotiated Compromise," *Third World Quarterly* 14, no. 1 (1993); and Karl, "El Salvador's Negotiated Revolution," 154-61. For the entire text of the final peace accord, see "Acuerdos de paz de Chapultepec," *Revista del Pensamiento Centroamericano* no. 214 (1992): 32-82.

27. There is a difference in terms of how the negotiations were carried out in El Salvador and Cambodia. In the first case, the parties to the conflict played an important role in bargaining over key issues in a way that gradually narrowed the differences separating them. In Cambodia, there was less input by the warring parties. There the United Nations more or less presented a full proposal to

fact that peace accords were successfully negotiated in both cases, as will become clear below, these differences would emerge as important factors affecting future progress in the peace process. After the signing of their respective peace accords, indeed, the paths of El Salvador and Cambodia present a fairly stark contrast.

### Stage 2: Implementing the Accord

In El Salvador, progress toward completing the steps mandated by the peace accord was quite smooth and steady throughout 1992. Unsurprisingly, certain resistance, disputes, and delays emerged along the way. From the outset, it became apparent that the schedule for various reforms was unrealistic and that certain delays were probably inevitable. There was also the regular exchange of recriminations over a series of issues, but progress continued to be made on key parts of the accord, especially in terms of the demobilization of the FMLN. The biggest crisis came between late October and late November 1992 over the issue of purges within the Army. The significance of this incidence was that it served as a reminder of the weakness of the civilian government and the security risks the FMLN were submitting to in turning in their arms. But if the transition from a military to a political approach to conflict was fraught with risks and tension, the irreversibility of the process was never seriously questioned and, in spite of continued action by death squads, no violations of the cease-fire were registered. Fortunately during the most critical moments, outside forces committed to the peace process and able to have a positive effect, stepped in. The role of the United Nations in rescheduling the peace plan and extending the deadline for the FMLN's full demobilization from the end of October to mid-December, and the pressure by the United States on the Salvadoran Army, indeed, were crucial in averting the crisis of the military purges. Things moved swiftly toward the formal end of the war, thereafter, when the so-called period of "armed peace" began when the February cease-fire was brought to a close in mid-December. Throughout 1992, in sum, the touchiest military aspects of the peace plan had been completed and the peace process continued to advance with clear momentum.<sup>28</sup>

In Cambodia, in contrast, the peace process ran into serious difficulties by mid-1992. One problem originated in the shortage of personnel and money the UNTAC faced in its attempts to administer the country. This led the UNTAC to allow some of the key administrative staff of the former Phnom Penh government to remain in their positions during the implementation of the peace accord. Though this step was taken somewhat out of necessity, it invited charges from the Khmer Rouge that the UN's transitional framework favored the regime.<sup>29</sup> The tarnished image of UN impartiality, then, provided the Khmer Rouge with a pretext for not keeping to the peace accord's demobilization schedule and also for refusing to participate in the UN-sponsored elections planned for May 1993. Another source of problems concerned the collapse of the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea (CGDK), as a result of Khmer Rouge intransigence and the withdrawal of US support. Very rapidly, the Son Sann faction diminished in importance, while the Sihanouk faction developed a strong standing, with its new political party—the FUNCINPEC—rapidly emerging as the likely winner of the May 1993 elections. This restructuring of the political landscape created a serious problem. If the Son Sann and the Sihanouk factions had initially allied with the forces in Phnom Penh, the latter reacted vigorously to the prospect of losing the elections. A series of attacks on FUNCINPEC personnel and offices were widely attributed to them and, in response, the Sihanouk faction denounced them and started to waiver in its support for the peace process.

By early 1993 the situation in Cambodia, if extremely fluid, provided few reasons for optimism. Through 1992 there have been various violations of the peace accord, including the kidnapping and threat to kill various UN observers by the Khmer Rouge as well as violations of the cease-fire agreement both by the Khmer Rouge and the former Phnom Penh government forces. If the FUNCINPEC and the former Phnom Penh government forces remained formally committed to the May 1993 elections, then the latter's occasional military forays into

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the parties, which could then either take it or leave it. Another difference concerns the regional peace efforts that were clearly more productive in Central America, due to the less complicated pattern of external involvement.

28. One key pending issue concerned the full purge of those military officers identified as having violated human rights. President Cristiani has violated the peace accord by delaying the purge beyond what he had agreed to.

29. "Easy Scapegoat: People Blame the UN for all their Woes," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 22 Oct. 1992.

Khmer Rouge-held territory and the Khmer Rouge's avowal to disrupt the peace process and not participate in the elections, did not bode well for the future of the peace process.

This contrasting level of success in the implementation phase calls for an explanation. In the following section, the divergent paths of El Salvador and Cambodia, following the signing of their respective peace accords, is discussed in terms of the four factors introduced above.

#### The Number, Inclusiveness, and Cohesion of the Parties to the Accord

One of the first and clear contrasts between El Salvador and Cambodia is the number, inclusiveness, and cohesion of the parties to the accord. In the case of El Salvador, the peace process revolved around an essentially dyadic dispute. The two parties to the conflict, thus, are broadly inclusive, representing the most relevant interests in the country. The various rebel factions that made war against the government had already entered the negotiation process under one banner, the FMLN, and subsequently maintained this common identity.<sup>30</sup> The two signatories to the peace accord have also retained a high degree of cohesiveness or ability to control their membership. Indeed, while a problem during the implementation phase was the government's complaint that FMLN backers were illegally taking over land, the main problems during this phase arose from the lack of cohesion in the government, particularly its inability to exercise control over its army.

In Cambodia, however, the situation was a lot more complex. When the United Nations brokered the peace accord, it negotiated with two parties: the Phnom Penh government and the CGDK (even though the individual members of the coalition signed the accord separately). Subsequently, with the collapse of the CGDK, the United Nations has ended up dealing with four factions with disparate goals and strategies. Not surprisingly, the configuration of relationships that existed between the factions at the time of the signing of the peace accord has undergone rapid change. Whereas the Son Sann and the Sihanouk factions had been allied with the Khmer Rouge in opposing the Phnom Penh government; subsequently, they began cooperating with the latter in the aftermath of the accords. This change in the political landscape weakened the Khmer Rouge's confidence in the peace process and played a role in its decision to threaten a return to military action. Furthermore, as Sihanouk's popularity increased and the cooperation between his faction and the former Phnom Penh government came to an end, the latter's inability to keep its own extremists under control has seriously threatened the peace process.

Thus, while in El Salvador key actor parameters such as the number, inclusiveness, and cohesion of the parties to the accord have remained more or less constant between the negotiation and implementation phases, in Cambodia they have undergone rapid change with destabilizing consequences. It is possible to conclude, as other studies have argued, that international intervention is more likely to contribute to maintaining the uncertain equilibrium of a win-win solution in instances involving disputes between two broadly representative parties that are able to exercise firm control over their membership.<sup>31</sup>

#### The Number and Interests of External Parties

With regard to a second factor, the number and interests of external parties; in the case of El Salvador, the situation was quite simple and straight-forward. There was one overwhelmingly important external actor, the United States, which remained committed to the peace process. To make the point, top military brass of the US Armed Forces went as far as visiting El Salvador to pressure those elements within the Salvadoran military that were voicing opposition to the planned purges of human rights violators. The United States also gave assurances to the FMLN that no aid would be given to El Salvador if the government violated the peace accord. Thus, the Salvadoran peace process clearly benefited from the stabilizing influence provided by only one main external actor committed to the process.

<sup>30</sup>. The unification of the FMLN came about in October 1980, more or less at the insistence of Fidel Castro. A condition for his offering any assistance to the rebel forces was that they have a clearly identifiable head. Hence, the five main guerrilla factions at the time came together in the FMLN.

<sup>31</sup>. Paul F. Diehl and Chetan Kumar, "Mutual Benefits from International Intervention: New Roles for United Nations Peacekeeping Forces," *Bulletin of Peace Proposals* 22, no. 2 (1991).

With regard to Cambodia, the situation was radically different. Not only were more actors involved than in El Salvador, but their interests were also more fluctuating. First, China's renewed involvement with the Khmer Rouge in the aftermath of the peace accord contributed to the perception among the Khmer Rouge's leadership that they might be able to prevail on the battlefield after all. The perception of a stalemate among the warring parties, one of the first conditions for international intervention in support of a win-win solution, was thus weakened. The Khmer Rouge's sense of the renewed viability of the military option was further strengthened by developments on the Thai-Cambodian border. In a masterly stroke of transnational diplomacy, the Khmer Rouge sold lucrative franchises in timber and gems to dozens of Thai companies that enjoyed connections with the Thai military and influential sections of the country's political elite.<sup>32</sup> Using these connections, the Khmer Rouge was able to retain their bases in Thailand and thereby escape the purview of the UN-sponsored demobilization programs. The Thai trade also provides the Khmer Rouge with a vital economic lifeline, and has been instrumental in bolstering its perception of being able to obtain a win-lose outcome in its favor.

The contrast between El Salvador and Cambodia is thus quite marked. These developments in Cambodia since the signing of the peace accord have put the implementation of the accords in considerable jeopardy. The different role played by key external actors has altered the initial conditions that allowed for the signing of the peace accord, strengthening the perception on the part of one of the signatories that a win-lose outcome in its favor is possible. Thus, the greater number of external parties involved in the Cambodian case has made it harder to maintain the balance which allowed for the signing of the peace accord. Also, in addition to these greater coordination problems, the interests of external parties in the Cambodian case have not coincided with the stabilization of the peace process.

#### The Transitional Institutional Framework

A third factor worth considering is the nature of the transitional institutional framework provided by the peace accord. In El Salvador, first of all, the role of the United Nations was quite limited. The peace accord called for the formation of the National Commission for the Consolidation of Peace (COPAZ) alongside the established government to formally supervise the implementation process. What was distinctive about COPAZ was that it was made up of two representatives of the government, two FMLN leaders, one military representative, and one representative from each of the parties in the Congress. It functioned, in other words, as a consensual body bringing together all major political forces in the country. As a body integrating various domestic forces, COPAZ then reported directly to President Cristiani and the United Nations Security Council. The role of the United Nations on the ground—the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador—was clearly a supporting one, centered mainly around the demobilization of the guerrilla armies.<sup>33</sup> In its limited role, therefore, the United Nations more easily retained its image as an impartial overseer in the eyes of both the government and the FMLN. Having pointed out abridgments of the peace accord by both the government and the FMLN, the UN Secretary-General was able to intervene with great success. In particular, at key points when delays in meeting various deadlines appeared to threaten the entire process, UN intervention was crucial in generating a consensus for a new and more flexible scheduling. Limited and to the point, the United Nations was able to intervene with great effectiveness.

In Cambodia the UN role was quite different. The size and degree of involvement of the United Nations was dramatically larger than in El Salvador. Under the Cambodian peace accord, a 12-member Supreme National Council was created in Phnom Penh, to provide a formal expression for Cambodian sovereignty until elections were held. But it was UNTAC that was de facto in charge of administering the country as well as supervising

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<sup>32</sup>. *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 12 Nov. 1992, p. 12-13.

<sup>33</sup>. For example, one of the biggest problems in El Salvador was the existence of a big rural refugee population. Part of the Salvadoran peace process involved the resettlement of these refugees. In initiating and promoting this process, the UN's Observer Mission in the El Salvador operation followed the lead of the various Salvadoran organizations that already existed for that purpose. Significant in this regard are the National Coordinator of Re-populations, a non-governmental organization representing the displaced; the Salvadoran government's commission on the displaced (CONADES); and the Christian Committee for the displaced (CRIPDES), a church-sponsored non-governmental organization. The UN's cooperation with these agencies has helped restore and strengthen civil society after years of warfare, thereby allowing the peace process to gain a momentum that is likely to continue once the United Nations begins to withdraw. See *Central America Report*, 13 March 1992.

the implementation of the peace accord. This institutional mechanism of international intervention has several significant consequences. The diversion of UNTAC energies and resources to essentially government roles, had a series of negative effects. The UN commitment to take over all administrative functions forced it to rely on many of the former Phnom Penh government's functionaries.<sup>34</sup> This led, in turn, to charges that the UN presence provided tacit support for the former Phnom Penh government. The fact that the United Nations took over the task of rebuilding the economy has also meant that a substantial inflow of cash is entering Phnom Penh. This has created a web of corruption among an already unmotivated bureaucracy left over from the days of Vietnamese domination, thereby widening the gap between the city-dwellers and the vast majority of the malnourished peasantry.

The Khmer Rouge has been quick to capitalize on this urban-rural gap by distributing some of its largesse accumulated from trans-boundary smuggling activities to the peasants, on the one hand, and by seeding discontent against the United Nations and the entire UNTAC operation on the other.<sup>35</sup> It has also capitalized on the fact that the speed with which merchants and traders of Vietnamese origin have used UN aid to restore their economic fortunes has created resentment among the Khmer population and roused old ethnic animosities to the point where the United Nations is seen as being at the centerpiece of a Vietnamese conspiracy to control Cambodia. In this context, it is not surprising that UN intervention has not been as effective as in El Salvador. In the absence on a local body like El Salvador's COPAZ, no institutional mechanism was provided for the signatories to the peace accord to regularly interact and express their views on the way in which the accord was being implemented. Given this vacuum, old fears and distrusts were left to fester. With the UN role opening itself to accusations of partiality, its bridging function and capacity for initiative has declined considerably.

#### The Actors' Evolving Perceptions of Electoral Chances

Finally, there is again a clear contrast between the Salvadoran and Cambodian cases. In the Salvadoran case, the decision of leaders that were part of the FDR-FMLN to move into the electoral arena that continued to operate with restrictions during the civil war had an important effect. Thus, when the Democratic Convergence participated in the electoral process in March 1991 before the signing of the peace accord, and was able to gain significant representation in the unicameral National Legislature, the move toward electoral competition was given great momentum.<sup>36</sup> With their former allies already participating in elections, the FMLN's decision to face the ballot boxes would not be a jump into a vacuum. With polls taken throughout 1992 showing the FMLN emerging as the second most popular political force, the perceived ability of the former guerrillas to transform themselves from a military to a political force increased.<sup>37</sup> On the other side, the good electoral performance of the government party, ARENA, in the 1988, 1989, and 1991 elections, gave the right a greater confidence in their ability to operate successfully in a future democratic system. On both sides, then, the main actors' evolving perceptions of electoral chances reinforced their determination to see the peace accord successfully implemented.

In Cambodia, important obstacles to the institutionalization of conflict became evident. Right from the beginning, in contrast to the FMLN, the Khmer Rouge never really had an agenda upon which to construct a political party; its ability to transform itself from a military to a political force could be doubted. With the breakup of the CGDK coalition, the Khmer Rouge increasingly saw its electoral possibilities diminish. This led it to renege on its promise to participate in the political process and to take steps to undermine a process in which it would inevitably end up a loser. Making matters even worse, the rising popularity of Prince Sihanouk has also led the former Phnom Penh government forces, increasingly dubious of their electoral prospects, to resort to force. Thus, the diminished chances of success by two key signatories to the peace accord, the Khmer Rouge and the former Phnom Penh government, presented a key obstacle to progress in the peace accord.

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<sup>34</sup>. *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 11 June 1992, p. 24-25.

<sup>35</sup>. David Roberts, "Cambodia: The Problems of a UN-brokered Peace," *The World Today*, July 1992.

<sup>36</sup>. As mentioned above, the Democratic Convergence was made up of important politicians aligned with the FMLN that came together as a new coalition representing the leftist agenda following the signing of the Esquipulas II accord in August 1987. In the March 1991 elections, they gained 12 percent of the vote and 8 of 84 seats in the unicameral National Legislature.

<sup>37</sup>. "FMLN Close on ARENA's Heel," *Central America Report*, 14 Aug. 1992.

In sum, while in El Salvador both the ARENA-led government and the FMLN appear secure in their strength in the electoral arena; in Cambodia, both the Khmer Rouge and the former Phnom Penh government were insecure about their electoral prospects. This provides support for the conclusion, emphasized in the democratization literature, that the security of the major actors reduces the volatility of the situation and increases the likelihood of the institutionalization of conflict. In other words, the prospects of successful implementation of a peace accord are increased when neither party to the peace accord appears to be condemned to the position of a permanent outsider in the future electoral game.

#### Lessons from the Cases of El Salvador and Cambodia

This article has analyzed the process of peaceful resolution of civil wars, in terms of a two stage process, through a comparison of El Salvador and Cambodia. Though this article will not attempt to do so, the conclusions reached through an intensive study of these two cases can be further tested against an ever expanding number of cases in which international intervention plays an important role in the resolution of civil conflicts. It bears mentioning that one main aim of the article has been to conjoin analyses developed within the fields of international relations and comparative politics, and to show how issues of domestic governance interact and affect the success of the process of international intervention. In concluding, then, the central arguments are restated along with some indications of their broader applicability.

Concerning the first stage, centered around the task of bringing the parties to the negotiating table and having them sign an accord, the following conclusions can be drawn. Strategic parity among the antagonists in the civil conflict appears to be one of the first key elements in making negotiations a realistic option. The cementing of a stalemated position in the battlefield, and the shift from a perception of a possible win-lose outcome to a lose-lose outcome, however, does not ensure that negotiations will begin. In situations of civil conflict where warring actors have developed deep-seated mistrust of each other in spite of the clear incentive to seek a peaceful resolution to the civil war, negotiations probably require the presence of intermediary actors that can provide certain crucial guarantees.

Where domestic intermediary actors are not to be found, the door for international intervention is open. In this regard, the end of the Cold War and the increasing willingness and interest of the superpowers to allow for greater UN initiative has made it possible for the United Nations to take advantage of these opportunities and to offer its services as a broker.<sup>38</sup> When these conditions are met, as they were in both Cambodia and El Salvador, the main contribution of international intervention toward reaching a peace accord revolves around containing the mutual distrust of actors and presenting proposals that could be accepted by both parties. Due to its image as an impartial body, the United Nations lowered the risks of entering and remaining in the peace process. It facilitated, in short, the stabilization of the uncertain equilibrium represented by the win-win outcome, resolving the primary difficulty of the Chicken game.

This argument could be tested in cases such as Mozambique, Angola, and Namibia where similar accords have been signed in the recent past, as well as in evolving situations such as the former Yugoslavia. With regard to the latter, one can observe how the recent Serb reversals on the field, as well as United States saber rattling on behalf of the Muslims, has helped to equalize the strategic balance between the contending ethnic groups. Looking forward, then, one would expect, from our argument, that a perception on the part of both the Bosnian Muslims as well as the Serbs that a military war was not able to be won would improve the likelihood of an accord being signed.

As the comparison of El Salvador and Cambodia makes starkly clear, whatever accomplishment the signing of a peace accord may represent the termination of a peace accord does not necessarily guarantee the long-term success of a peace process. Indeed, the second stage in peacefully resolving civil conflicts, the implementation of the signed accord, can be as complex and difficult as the negotiation phase. What is at stake is whether the initial conditions that permitted a win-win solution are reproduced or, in negative terms, whether a renewed

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<sup>38</sup>. The degree of interest on the part of both regional as well as global actors to see "something done" is, indeed, a striking contrast to cases such as Cambodia and El Salvador and other venues of intense civil conflict; for instance Sudan and Tajikistan, where the lack of attention impedes a peace process from even starting.



perception on the part of one or more of the actors that they can obtain a win-lose solution in their favor is avoided. In considering this process, four factors appear to play a role in determining whether the peace process, despite a successful negotiation stage, might fail to be implemented. Even though the mutual interaction among actors and other factors makes it hard to isolate effects, the following conclusions can be drawn.

First, concerning the *number, inclusiveness, and cohesion of the parties* to the accord; the smaller the number of actors, the greater their inclusiveness or chance of representing the population as a whole and the greater their control over their membership. Also, the likelihood will be greater that a peace accord is successfully implemented. Concerning a second factor, the *number and interests of external parties*; one can say that the greater the number of external parties, the harder it will be to maintain the balance that allowed for the signing of the peace accord. The greater coordination problems make matters more complicated; but it is also crucial to consider whether there are changes in the interests of external actors. Changing interests of key external actors can alter the initial conditions that allowed for the signing of the peace accord, strengthening the perception on the part of one of the signatories that a win-lose outcome in its favor is possible. This type of perception is bound to destabilize the peace process.

Third, with respect to the *transitional institutional framework* provided for by the peace accord, some interesting conclusions emerge. Successful international intervention appears to be more likely when carried out on a fairly limited scale and linked to very pointed objectives. This is so because it reduces the likelihood that the perception of the United Nations as an impartial body will be tarnished. Moreover, the presence of an institutional mechanism whereby contact between signatories to the peace accord is regularized further enhances the prospects of success. These features are crucial, inasmuch as they determine the ability for mid-course corrections that can help contain and resolve unforeseen problems. They could, in other words, help to prevent the derailing of the entire peace process.

Finally, concerning the *actors' evolving perceptions of electoral chances*; the present analysis argues that a key indicator of success is the confidence on the part of the governing body that its vital interests will not be threatened in the future and that the ability of the challenging force to transform itself from a military to a political force is assured.

These four factors go a long way in explaining two contrasting experiences; the steady progress of the peace process in the Salvadoran case and the uncertain status of the Cambodian case. Going beyond the cases of El Salvador and Cambodia, these arguments could be tested against a number of recent examples of international intervention. Similarities between Cambodia and situations such as the one in Angola would help to explain why UN-brokered accords collapsed in the latter two cases, and would strengthen our conclusions.<sup>39</sup> Similarities between El Salvador and the successfully implemented peace accord in Namibia, in turn, would provide further confirming evidence.

Based on this analysis, then, certain recommendations regarding the UN's role can be provided. This analysis shows some of the limits and possibilities of international intervention. First of all, in a very real manner, international intervention must wait until the situation is "ripe." That is, successful international intervention depends on certain "contextual" conditions that are, for the most part, beyond the control of bodies like the United Nations. As indicated, the main contribution of international intervention revolved around the provision of guarantees that only an impartial party could provide. However, the warring parties must first decide to turn to an intermediary actor, and likely domestic candidates should probably be absent before the United Nations can broker an accord. Thereafter, the peace process advances inasmuch as the initial conditions allowing for the signing of a peace accord are maintained. As the discussion of four key factors indicates, the possibilities of international intervention are again fairly constrained. If there are negative changes in any of the first three factors that alter the uncertain equilibrium that made the peace accord possible, then there is little a body like the United Nations can do directly. Thus, the main opportunity for the United Nations to make any

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<sup>39</sup>. The parallels between RENAMO (Mozambique National Resistance) and the Khmer Rouge, in terms of their similar lack of a political program, point to an important obstacle in that case. As in Cambodia, the reduced ability of the challenging force to transform itself from a military to a political force could turn into a chasm that cannot be bridged.

important difference depends upon the nature of the transitional institutional framework. The comparison between El Salvador and Cambodia provides some important lessons in this respect.

Chronologically prior to the entire discussion in this article, one last issue remains. There can be no doubt that there is a direct relation between a challenger's development of a political agenda as a rationale for fighting a civil war and smooth progress in any future peace process. This fact has led some to argue that one of the main mistakes in the Cambodian case was to have included the Khmer Rouge in the negotiation process in the first place. An alternative route would have been to seek a peace accord that excluded the Khmer Rouge.<sup>40</sup> This hypothetical scenario has its merits, but also its problems. On the positive side, it would have allowed for the isolation and marginalization of the Khmer Rouge and, most likely, a peace process with greater momentum;<sup>41</sup> but there would also be a substantial risk involved. Given its significant military power, the exclusion of the Khmer Rouge would drive the latter to destabilize the peace process from the outside.<sup>42</sup> Thus, it is hard to assess whether the long term prospects are better as a result of the inclusion of the Khmer Rouge in the negotiation process, a strategy that has allowed the Khmer Rouge to threaten the peace process from within, or whether the alternative route would have been more promising. What does appear clear is that the possibility of the United Nations failing in its largest peacekeeping operation ever, makes the study of the conditions for international intervention an issue of utmost relevance.

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40. Serge Thion, "Failure in Cambodia," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 21 Jan. 1993.

41. Within the comparative literature, a similar point is made to account for the successful transition in Spain as opposed to the stalled transition in Brazil. See Guillermo O'Donnell, "Transitions, Continuities, and Paradoxes," in Scott Mainwaring, Guillermo O'Donnell and J. Samuel Valenzuela, eds., *Issues in Democratic Consolidation: The New South American Democracies in Comparative Perspective* (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992), 27-31.

42. The Colombian case points to the importance of the inclusiveness of the parties to the accord. The Colombian peace process has been hampered because there are various guerrilla groups in the country, some of which have joined the peace process and are now well on the way to being integrated as political forces, while other guerrilla forces continue to fight. In the Colombian case, the presence of the drug lords, an important actor that has had a destabilizing role, also complicates the situation. The low inclusiveness of the parties to the peace accord, in other words, represents a crucial problem.