



## El Salvador's Unfinished Reforms

Partisan politics, severe poverty, a soaring crime wave, and a failure to deal with a legacy of atrocities have slowed democratic reform in El Salvador.

**A**lthough the civil war in El Salvador has ended and the formal mechanisms of democracy are in place, much remains to be done if that country is to enjoy a stable, democratic future, say a group of experts.

Since the United Nations–brokered peace accords were negotiated in 1992, El Salvador has initiated numerous reforms that have led to the demilitarization of society, freedom of the press, an improved human rights regime, and a movement among political parties and institutions toward pluralism.

However, the reform process is far from complete, especially in the judiciary, say a number of experts. There is a pressing need to establish a credible and reliable justice system, accessible to all Salvadorans. And, some experts argue, the country needs to account for the crimes of the past—“the legacy of atrocities,” including the killing of six Jesuit priests, their housekeeper, and her daughter in 1989 and of large numbers of civilians found in mass graves or

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*Left:*  
Hundreds of Salvadoran medical and Social Security employees march in the streets of San Salvador in January to protest plans to privatize the health sector.

## El Salvador

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**Above:** Unidentified Salvadoran friends and family members carry coffins containing the remains of loved ones exhumed from a mass grave in the town of Santa Rosa in January. The deceased had been murdered in 1980 during El Salvador's civil war.

who simply disappeared.

Additionally, severe poverty and a soaring crime rate pose serious threats to the country's future.



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Some 15 experts and Salvadoran leaders discussed these and related issues at a U.S. Institute of Peace meeting on "El Salvador: An Assessment of the Implementation of the 1992 Peace Accords," held on December 8, 1999. Three panels focused on "Military, Police, and Judicial Reforms," "Reunification and Democratization in Salvadoran Society," and "Lessons Learned and Their Application for Future Peacebuilding."

In addition, **Teresa Whitfield**, special assistant to the UN assistant secretary general for political affairs, spoke on "The Role of the United Nations in Peacebuilding in El Salvador." The event was moderated by **Charles Nelson**, vice president of the Institute and coordinator of its work on Latin America. The Institute plans to publish a Peaceworks report on the meeting in the spring.

#### Reform and Democratization

Reforms, especially those relating to human rights and justice, have been hampered by popular calls

for authoritarian measures to deal with the rising crime wave, said **Margaret Popkin**, executive director of the Due Process of Law Foundation. Indeed, crime exceeds the country's capacity to deal with it, leaving the public increasingly afraid of violence at a time when, with the war over, they had hoped for increased security, she said.

Reform of the military, however, has been quite successful, speakers agreed. After a special investigation, an ad hoc commission recommended that almost the entire high command of the military be discharged for violations of human rights, they noted. More than 100 officers were discharged. More important, civilian controls over the military and security forces were strengthened, and the military retreated from national politics.

Reform of the judiciary has lagged in part because the nature of the country's judicial institutions makes it difficult to remove dishonest or incompetent judges and officials. Further, there is a critical shortage of trained lawyers and judges, especially those in the area of human rights, speakers said.

The police force, which still needs significant reform, has been unable to deal with the crime wave in part due to internal problems, including disputes over leadership, the composition of police units, and discipline problems, said **Gino Costa**, a consultant to the United Nations on police reform and human rights. The crisis in public security has dampened public support for major police reforms, and the political leadership seems unable to carry them out, he said. Indeed, civilian leaders have relied



# Roundtable on Justice & Reconciliation

on the military to oversee the security forces, Costa said.

**Gerson Martinez**, first vice president of the legislative assembly for 1997–2000 and member of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN), noted that the peace accords have essentially been implemented and the major task of political leaders today is to consolidate reforms. However, the recommendations for reconciliation have been largely ignored. For example, he said, the victims of the war have not been honored nor have their families received either moral or material reparation.

Political leaders also need to take measures to modernize the economy and spur development, which would help to stem the crime wave, Martinez said.

**Mauricio Barrera**, El Salvador's permanent representative to the Organization of American States, said that in spite of the limitations of the peace accords and the need for continued reform, the Salvadoran people—and the political forces in particular—have undergone a change in values, conduct, and expectations. The democratic system is becoming increasingly participatory and will continue to develop and mature, he said. Social and labor organizations are becoming stronger. And the search for consensus and negotiation over many unsettled issues continues.

## Key Points and Recommendations

Participants' additional selected key points and recommendations—detailed in the forthcoming Peaceworks report—are listed below:

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**A**t the same time that United Nations investigators were exhuming bodies of East Timorese executed at a mass gravesite in West Timor, Indonesian officials were in Washington exploring issues of accountability, justice, and reconciliation in an effort to come to terms with the recent violence in their country. The conflict in East Timor erupted after the province voted for independence from Indonesia last fall.



A group of high-level Indonesian officials attended a discussion of the role of justice and reconciliation in democratic transitions organized by the U.S. Institute of Peace and the U.S. Department of State. The workshop was held in Washington, D.C., on January 24. Indonesian participants included three cabinet ministers and four other senior Indonesians, including two from leading nongovernmental organizations.

In addition to the Indonesian participants, the meeting brought together officials from Argentina, Chile, El Salvador, South Korea, and South Africa—along with several experts in transitional justice issues, including **Neil J. Kritz**, director of the Institute's Rule of Law Program. Kritz has worked on the challenge of transitional justice in more than 500 countries and edited a pathbreaking work on the subject, *Transitional Justice: How Emerging Democracies Reckon with Former Regimes*, a three-volume compendium published by the USIP Press.

Participants in the workshop shared lessons learned from democracies that have recently grappled with issues of justice and national reconciliation after periods of political repression or violent civil strife. South Africa's Archbishop **Desmond Tutu** delivered the keynote presentation to the group. "We live in a moral universe, and one day we are all held accountable for our actions," he said.

The meeting illustrated the growing level of international cooperation among democracies, said Institute president **Richard H. Solomon**, an expert on Asian affairs. Many participants had played critical roles in their respective nations' handling of justice and reconciliation issues. **Patrick Cronin**, director of the Institute's Research and Studies Program, noted that the meeting sought to help young democracies emerging from recent conflicts examine and address transitional justice issues in a manner that will enable them to build and strengthen stable democratic institutions and help prevent further conflict.

*Left to right:* Emil Salim of Indonesia's national human rights commission; Marzuki Darusman, Indonesia's attorney general; Hasballah M. Saad, Indonesian minister of state for human rights affairs; Richard Solomon; Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa; Yusril Izha Mahendra, Indonesian minister of law and legislation; and Chester Crocker.



# Leadership for Peace

The requirements of U.S. leadership for peace raise dilemmas that Americans are likely to debate vigorously in the coming year.

If we are to have a more peaceful world in the 21st century, the United States must exert what might be called “leadership for peace,” says **Richard H. Solomon**, president of the U.S. Institute of Peace. Such leadership will require this country to “take the initiative away from the bad guys,” through setting in motion a broad range of measures designed to build and sustain peace, he says. These measures include developing more effective institutions and policies and using power more efficiently to prevent or resolve international conflict. However, Solomon cautions, leadership presents Americans with difficult dilemmas.

Solomon discussed “The Prospects for Peace” at the Hirshhorn Museum in Washington, D.C., on January 2. The talk was part of the “Future Visions” series of America’s Millennium on the Mall celebration. The series was designed to encourage distinguished public figures and commentators to discuss and imagine what life may be like in the new millennium. **Allen Weinstein**, president of the Center for Democracy and member of the Institute of Peace’s board of directors, moderated “The Prospects for Peace” session.

While Americans want a more peaceful world—and much of the world looks to the United States for international leadership—Americans do not want to be the world’s policeman, its “global sheriff,” Solomon said. “We want others to share the burden. But we don’t want to compromise our sovereignty by giving too much power and responsibility for peacemaking to international organizations—the United Nations, for example—or to other countries. We want other countries to respect the human rights of their people, but at the same time we are reluctant to intervene in their internal affairs,” he said. “Resolving these dilemmas will be a matter of vigorous debate in our country, as we are likely to see in the upcoming presidential election.”

## The Importance of Preventive Action

It is much less costly and difficult to deal with a conflict situation before it turns violent, Solomon stressed. But taking preventive action requires changing the way we deal with the world. It requires altering the “rules of the international game” as the world has known them for centuries, he

said. It requires a degree of activism, a willingness to intervene in the affairs of other countries, something we are not comfortable with.

However, world figures such as Pope John Paul II, Great Britain’s Tony Blair, and the UN’s Kofi Annan recently have challenged the international community to take a moral stand that sovereignty doesn’t give governments the right to grossly abuse their people or to threaten their neighbors. This growing conviction internationally is likely to lead to vast changes in the concept of sovereignty. “A century from now, the old notion of state sovereignty—the legal concept, and the way states deal with each other—is likely to look quite different than it does today,” Solomon predicted.

Preventive action also requires the United States to more effectively coordinate its political and military strengths: “to make clear to the tyrants and oppressors that we will not tolerate their use of force, but also that we are prepared for the political resolution of issues in dispute,” Solomon said. “We’re only now coming to grips with the difficult challenges of implementing a policy that some call ‘coercive diplomacy’ as an alternative to war.” Coercive





diplomacy involves the threat of force or the limited use of force to reinforce diplomacy and strengthen prospects of achieving political objectives.

### The Work of the Institute of Peace

Finally, to provide leadership for peace, the United States needs new generations of foreign affairs specialists—“we used to call them ‘diplomats,’” Solomon said—professionals skilled in the techniques of conflict management. This is the area in which the Institute of Peace plays a vital role through its research, education, and training work. “For example, the Institute of Peace trains our military in the skills needed for peacekeeping operations,” Solomon said. “We do research and training in support of diplomats and others in mediation and negotiating skills. We work with nongovernmental organizations—‘NGOs,’ which are private sector organizations like Doctors Without Borders, recent winner of the Nobel Prize for Peace; the International Crisis Group; or the Community of St. Egidio—to help coordinate their humanitarian assistance work in places like the Great Lakes region of Africa or the Balkans, or to promote their work in conflict resolution and mediation.

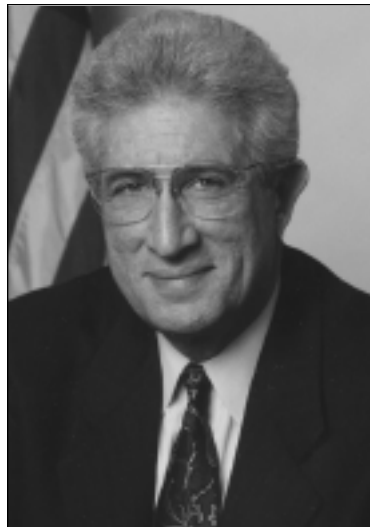
“And, through high school and college education programs like our annual National Peace Essay Contest, we attract our young people to careers in international affairs.”

### Private Ambassadors for Peace

Further, private individuals are playing an increasingly significant role in matters of war and peace. “We still look to the government for our basic security, and for

leadership in international affairs,” Solomon said. But increasingly, private individuals—“personages” like Jimmy Carter, George Mitchell, and James Baker, or activists like Landrum Bolling—are playing major roles as negotiators for peace or promoters of post-conflict reconciliation.

Religious communities—like the Quakers, Mennonites, Methodists, and Catholics—are ever more at the front lines of U.S. dealings with countries in crisis, as are NGOs like John



Wallach’s Seeds of Peace program, which brings young Israelis and Palestinians together to help break the cycle of intergenerational hatred and conflict, Solomon said. The American business community has replaced the U.S. Agency for International Development as the primary influence of this country in promoting economic development abroad. “These are America’s new ‘ambassadors,’” Solomon said. “Through them and their organizations, the greater public can have some direct influence over issues of war and peace.

“In conclusion, I believe our country is committed to building a less violent, more peaceful world

in the 21st century,” Solomon said. “In our own self-interest we can afford to do no less.” That commitment is evident in the work of the United States Institute of Peace, created by Congress in the mid-1980s to do research and education on issues of war and peace. “Today we are training new generations of professionals in the skills of international conflict management,” Solomon said. The Institute also supports the work of other organizations in conflict prevention and reconciliation.

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—Richard Solomon

With the support of Congress and the public, the Institute is now building a permanent facility at the northwest corner of the National Mall—near the Lincoln Memorial and our national memorials to those who died for our security in World War II, Korea, and Vietnam. “With public support, only a few years from now, our building will be at ‘the war and peace’ corner of the Mall,” Solomon concluded. “We will have constructed an international center for research, education, and professional training that will make the new century a time of less violence, if not a time of full peace.”



## virtual Diplomacy

### Geographic Information Systems (GIS)

A rapidly developing information technology—called Geographic Information Systems (GIS)—reveals patterns, relationships, and trends among a broad range of data that would not necessarily be apparent otherwise, experts say. Geographic information systems can support refugee resettlement, electoral analyses, land distribution, and natural resources management, to name but a few of its functions.

The U.S. Institute of Peace sponsored a meeting on GIS technology on November 17. Speakers at the event explored the lessons learned from applications of GIS in rehabilitation and reconstruction activities in war-ravaged nations such as Bosnia, El Salvador, and Kosovo. The meeting was organized by **Sheryl Brown** and **Margarita Studemeister**, co-directors of the Institute's Virtual Diplomacy initiative.

GIS takes numbers and words from rows and columns in databases and spreadsheets, and integrates data, allowing users to visualize the information on computer-rendered maps. The technology offers practitioners from different disciplines the opportunity to share a common base of information. Speakers at the Institute meeting described the complexity of integrating GIS data from multiple, varied sources, including satellite images, global positioning systems, and quantitative and descriptive data sets maintained by different agencies. They also stressed the importance of developing the capability to use GIS within organizations, and of exchanging information across various organizations to optimize their mutual understanding, coordination, and cooperation before, during, and after conflict.

To hear a webcast of the GIS workshop, visit our website at <http://www.usip.org/oc/events/gis.html>.

### El Salvador

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- The Legislative Assembly is in a state of political deadlock, and partisan politics has taken precedence over addressing critical national problems.
- There is a need for a professional, non-partisan electoral commission or council to oversee elections and institute further electoral reforms.
- Political assassinations and the persistence of death squads pose a continuing threat to democracy.
- Civilian ministers of defense must be appointed.
- Strict civilian control must be established over military budgets and appropriations, and public accountability and transparency in the system of national accounts must be strengthened.
- Constitutional reforms are needed to end the concentration of judicial functions in the Supreme Court.
- Appointment of an independent, honest attorney general is needed to restore public trust in the new National Civilian Police and its investigative capacity, for which the attorney general is responsible.

## InstitutePeople

**JON B. ALTERMAN**, program officer in the Research and Studies Program, published "The Middle East's Information Revolution" in the January issue of *Current History*, and "How World Wide is the Web?" in *iMP*, an online magazine.

Executive vice president **HARRIET HENTGES** spoke at the Institute for Strategic Studies in Washington, D.C., in January as part of a panel on "Assessing Bosnia-Herzegovina: Future Challenges."

**NEIL J. KRITZ**, director of the Rule of Law Program, conducted a workshop on "Different Approaches to Accountability and Impunity: How to Choose the Right Balance" at the 1999 Democracy and Governance Partners Conference, sponsored by the U.S. Agency for International Development.

**DEEPA OLLAPALLY**, program officer in the Grant Program, published "India's Security Environment" in the January 2000 issue of *Seminar 485*.

# Challenges in the Middle East

While the Middle East peace talks progress, the people of the region express both concern and hope for the future.

While the Middle East peace talks between the Israelis and Palestinians lurch forward, Lebanese policy analysts express concern about the future of some 400,000 Palestinian refugees concentrated largely in the southern part of their country, says **Steven M. Riskin**, a Middle East specialist and program officer in the U.S. Institute of Peace's Grant Program. Lebanese policy analysts also worry whether Lebanon will have some voice in determining the fate of the refugees either in the context of the Israeli-Syrian talks or in the broader multilateral negotiations under the Madrid framework. And some say they are apprehensive about a planned Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon because of the potential power vacuum and political uncertainty such a pullback might bring.

Riskin discussed these and related issues with scholars, policy specialists, and practitioners in several Middle Eastern countries, including Lebanon and Israel, and in the West Bank during a November 1999 trip. He traveled to the region to visit Institute grant recipients and potential grantees.

Lebanon is in the midst of an expensive and uneasy reconstruction process, with huge amounts of resources being expended to rebuild infrastructure at a time of serious economic difficulties, Riskin says. And below the surface of Beirut's reconstruction are the deeper social, economic, and

political-religious issues that led to the bloody civil war of 1975-90. These issues, which have yet to be fully addressed, include differences among political and religious groups over powersharing, the distribution of wealth, and the country's identity and regional orientation. They are complicated by several external elements—Syria's dominant influence in the country, the Israeli occupation of the south, and the presence of such a large community of Palestinian refugees.

During Riskin's visit, the new Israeli government led by Ehud Barak was beginning to gain traction from—as well as face internal opposition to—the signing of the September 4 Sharm el-Sheikh agreement, which gave focus to and a specific timetable for Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. With a February 2000 deadline looming for a framework agreement for negotiations, and with Israeli withdrawal from some Palestinian territories continuing, albeit in fits and starts, incidents flared between the Israeli military and Israeli settlers intent on remaining. Indeed, the fate of Israeli settlements—which are located in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, as well as on the Golan Heights—represents but one of the many issues Israelis will need to come to terms with as both the Israeli-Palestinian and Israeli-Syrian talks move forward, Riskin says.

In the West Bank, the Palestinians are engaged in the chal-

lenging and troubled process of developing their economy, building and consolidating governmental structures, and instituting democracy and the rule of law—a process made more difficult by many obstacles, including the uncertainty concerning Israeli-Palestinian negotiations and the ultimate nature and shape of the future Palestinian entity.



Steven M. Riskin

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And while Israeli-Palestinian negotiations continue on their problematic path to addressing the deep and complex final status issues, modest but encouraging signs indicate that an increasing number of Palestinians and Israelis recognize the inevitability of sharing the land west of the Jordan River, Riskin notes. And with that realization, they also are coming to appreciate that development of mutual understanding and respectful interaction between the two communities is now critical to stabilizing any peace agreement that may emerge from the current negotiations.

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