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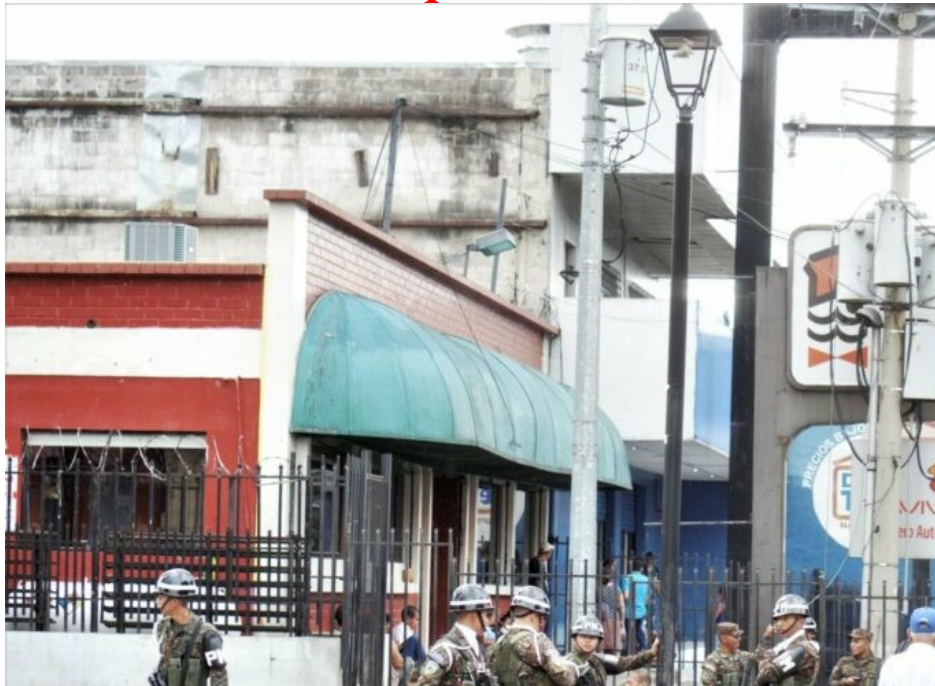
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European Languages

زبانهای اروپایی

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19.05.2023

El Salvador, the peace that cannot be



Sources: Rebellion [Photo: Soldiers in the streets of El Salvador]

This is the story of the Little Thumb of Latin America who together with his brothers and sisters sought a better world with a few crumbs and pebbles in his hand. But, unlike the tale, they did not find the seven-league boots and fell prey to the great ogre who loves the smell of human flesh and who lives in Washington.

No in your backyard

Was once that The Savior was able to move the whole world. Now alone It's news for the president's baseball cap, bitcoin as means of payment or the opening of the largest prison in the world. There was also a time when we in Europe hardly knew about his existence and in which even the United States had little or No interest in what was happening there.

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But the Revolution came. Cuban and growing unrest in the United States. Those were the years of the Cold War. To the Powerful neighbor to the north Entered fear and stopped being indulgent.

The March 13, 1961 the United States launched the *Alliance for Progress*. The Alliance would provide the framework for all its programs in the Americas. Latin America and the Caribbean, and aimed to "defeat" the threat communist in the region. On September 4, 1961 the Congress It adopted a new law on foreign aid along the same lines. The The Ministry of Defence would manage the military component of the aid. The social and economic component was assigned to a new agency, the *Agency of the United States for International Development (USAID)*, What It was created on November 3, 1961. The two instances had to To combat together "the threat of ideologies such as the communism." U.S. embassies had to ensure coordination and complementarity between the two About the terrain.



U.S. President John F. Kennedy meets with representatives of the Alliance for Latin American Progress. (Abbie Rowe, Wikimedia Commons / CC0 1.0)

According to the official discourse, the Alliance was to bring economic prosperity. At the same time, it was the perfect coverage. for the United States to prepare armies, police, and intelligence services to suppress insurrections and Revolutions. In the early sixties, the States United States began training the Salvadoran army in tactics anti-guerrillas, death squads included. In that At the time, however, there were no signs of armed resistance. resurgent in El Salvador.

The Fire in the wick

The Economic prosperity mainly favored the rich, the called "14 families" who got along well with the army that It was to ensure order and peace. For the majority of the population The consequences were disastrous. A succession of crises Economic and a growing political awareness stimulated the social and political protest. Peasants, workers, teachers and Students demonstrated as the driving force of a resistance peaceful and broad-based people.

To In the late sixties the Salvadoran army had built a vast network of 80,000 paramilitaries that responded to the ORDER name (Organization Nationalist Democrat), Precursor of the infamous death squads of the years Seventy-eighty. Their mission was to locate and eliminate the Communists. The local divisions were led by the military, members of the National Guard and secret intelligence. In more on one occasion they were deployed to kill unarmed civilians.

The Popular resistance became radicalized and began to arm itself. After the The military coup of 1979 exponentially increased the quantity complaints of arbitrary detentions, torture, disappearances, murders and massacres. Between 1980 and 1982 there was an average of about 1000 victims a day. The Preferred targets were trade unions, and the peasant and student organizations.



Photo: Victims of death squads in San Salvador in 1981. (Wikeleaks, Wikimedia Commons / CC0 1.0)

The Harsh repression led the different resistance groups to close ranks and unite under a common command in the Front Farabundo Martí of National Liberation (FMLN). The On January 10, 1981, they launched a broad offensive. It was the beginning of A civil war that lasted 12 years.

Course To the resounding fiasco

The The repression that followed the 1979 coup d'état made the The United States, at least momentarily. But after the Sandinista victory in neighboring Nicaragua to Earlier that year, crushing the insurgency in El Salvador was Turned in a matter of life and death for the United States. Until engaged Israel to supply weapons, aircraft and tanks, and send military advisers under the pretext of reform agrarian. The CIA and USAID brought even more money into the country. supposed that a Christian Democrat president, Napoleon Duarte, It could restore calm and prevent a seizure of power by the "Marxists."

In the period from 1980 to 1990 the United States spent almost 6,000 million dollars in aid programs for El Salvador, more than billion of which in military aid. The Department of Stateknew that the military continued to systematically abuse its power, and They also remained unpunished. To Despite the official discourse on human rights, the funds are They disbursed again and again. The United States feared that the FMLN would win the war.

In [a Study Report](#) on the Practice of the Counterinsurgency Doctrine of the United States in El Salvador, the RAND Institute (*National Defense Research Institute*) of the United States did not mince words. El Salvador, which is considered an "ideal test case", it was a resounding fiasco in all aspects. "America has failed," he says. the report. "It's precisely the young, aggressive officers. who were trained by the United States those who are more imbued with far-right thinking and (...) who have committed many atrocities." Land and land reforms justice, which were devised and implemented by USAID, also They were the object of his strong criticism, as was the peace plan. civic-military that should have softened the image of the army among the population through the provision of services Social.

There was no other way.

The FMLN had always been committed to finding a solution Negotiated policy. As early as August 1981 France and Mexico recognized the FMLN's alliance with its political counterpart, the Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR), as "a force representative policy' and therefore as an interlocutor for full right at a negotiating table, to which the States United they had always opposed each other. Until 1990. The Wall of Berlin had fallen, the

Soviet Union was about to Collapsed, the Sandinistas in Nicaragua had lost their elections and in El Salvador it was evident that it was impossible to hold elections. Military victory of either party.

The The United Nations mediated, but not without the prior agreement of the United States. Javier Perez Cuellar, UN Secretary General, intervened personally in Several occasions to unblock discussions. The The demilitarization of El Salvador was the number one priority for the FMLN. It was agreed to establish a Truth Commission to investigate major crimes of war and the maintenance of public order was no longer competence of the Armed Forces. The Peace Accords also satisfied the FMLN's demands to purge the armed forces and reform the Fund the police and the judicial system. Without However, the fundamentals of the economic system and the social injustice. The The FMLN failed to obtain much more than a commitment to organize a socio-economic forum.



Photo: FMLN Cartel (Chupacabras, Flickr/CC BY-SA)

The On 16 January 1992, the Peace Accords of Chapultepec. In the months that followed, 15,000 FMLN militants deposed weapons. The FMLN was facing the Huge challenge to

reinvent itself, this time as a political party. In the years to come, he had to face old enmities and the opportunism of some leaders who acted primarily out of self-interest.

The War is dead, long live war

The ONUSAL, the UN observer mission charged with monitoring the fulfillment of the Peace Agreements, left El Salvador on April 30, 1995. His term was over. The 1994 elections had perpetuated ARENA's power, including in Parliament. Were known the strong historical links of this Far-right party with the army, the squads of the death and the economic elite. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the successor of Perez de Cuellar, did not see with good eyes that the Salvadoran government follow blocking any progress in the implementation of the Agreements. Made every effort to extend the mandate of ONUSAL, but the UN Security Council was no longer interested, nor were the United States. El Salvador was no longer a priority.

ONUSAL it was the first UN peacekeeping mission whose mandate included human rights. On March 15, 1993 the Truth Commission made its report public. In eight months he had documented more than 75,000 cases of torture, murders and disappearances. In 85% of the cases are identified as responsible the army, police and death squads. One of the recommendations were that those responsible be brought before the justice. In response, the Salvadoran government (ARENA) rushed to enact a general amnesty law. Herself had marked the tone.

More 20 years later, in 2016, the Constitutional Court declared The Amnesty Law is unconstitutional. The army simply ignored the order of President Salvador Cerén (FMLN; 2014-2019) to open your files. To this day. It's not just the military Salvadorans who refuse to share their files, the Center Washington's human rights program is also struggling to have access to the archives of the CIA, the Ministry of Defense and the Department of State the United States, and yet much of it is censored.

Thirty and one year after the signing of the Peace Accords no Significant progress has been made in the area of human rights. Tens of thousands of victims are still waiting for recognition and some form of repair. So far justice has only been able to process about five thousand cases. The program established by the President Cerén to repair the victims was extinguished cynically because Parliament refused to approve the Budgets Necessary. To Despite recurrent testimonies of army complicity and the police in serious human rights violations, the United States continues to support them. The Salvadoran army is a crucial ally for the United States in its war against drugs (*War on Drugs*) and can be easily deployed in UN peacekeeping missions and NATO in countries such as Iraq,

Afghanistan and Mali. The United States they can also have the Salvadoran air base in Comalapa and recently supplied ultra-modern combat helicopters so that the Salvadoran army could properly carry out its international missions.

Low the pretext of combating "mara" violence, drug gangs that primarily terrorize Poor neighborhoods, death squads continue to operate with impunity. USAID refused to support the Plan El Salvador Seguro developed by the government of Cerén and co-approved by USAID, and preferred to launch parallel initiatives with its SolucionesES program. There is no one anymore I would like to recall that it was the United States itself that exported gangs to El Salvador shortly after the Accords of Peace.

"Soft war" and "lawfare"

The FMLN had than waiting 18 years before winning the presidential election. He ruled for ten years (Mauricio Funés, 2009-2014; Salvador Sanchez Cerén, 2014-2019), but without a parliamentary majority. The threat of a Military coup was never far away. Shortly after Funés took office in June 2009, there was a coup d'état in Honduras against President Mel Zelaya, who he sought to get closer to President Chavez in Venezuela. The States United States didn't even bother to deny their involvement. After of the 2014 elections ARENA threatened a coup d'état. The FMLN had gotten the message and governed cautiously.

But It wasn't the only threat. The war against the FMLN is also going on. It waged – and is – through the media, which They are in the hands of the same Salvadoran elite that also controls Parliament and the economy, and even present themselves as representatives of "civil society". Under that heading even blocked an FMLN bill for the right of reply. Yes herself Find out a little more on the websites of the so-called press independent, regularly meets with USAID and Open Society Foundations as funders of what they define as freedom of expression. In the face of so much media violence, local radio stations, some of which the FMLN initiated during the civil war, have little resource.

The Justice is also used as a weapon. Both President Funés and Cerén are accused of embezzlement of public funds. The Accusations suggest similar insinuations against others Left-wing presidents who dared to question the dominance of the USA: Lula (Brazil), Correa (Ecuador), Morales (Bolivia), Chávez (Venezuela), Ortega (Nicaragua), Zelaya (Honduras) and Castillo (Peru). The hand of the United States is never far away. The struggle Against corruption is one of USAID's priorities, also in El Salvador. Interpol still refuses to issue an arrest warrant international against Funés because he is not authorized for disputes policies.

The New Messiah

Since that Nayib Bukele assumed the presidency on June 1, 2019 seems that there are no brakes anymore. In 2017 the FMLN expelled him from the party. How communication expert in the family business, Bukele knows better that nobody is important which are well-orchestrated public relations. For your campaign Electoral hired an international marketing team, which included supporters of Juan Guaidó, the self-proclaimed man – with the backing of the United States – President of Venezuela, and CID Gallup, a consultancy that had already conducted several assignments for USAID and the CIA.

In The previous legislatures the army had already managed to recover Little by little his former power. When Bukele took office, he promised More troops and more resources. In February 2020 he made the Military fence Parliament and obliged the Members present to approve a \$109 million loan for the armed forces.

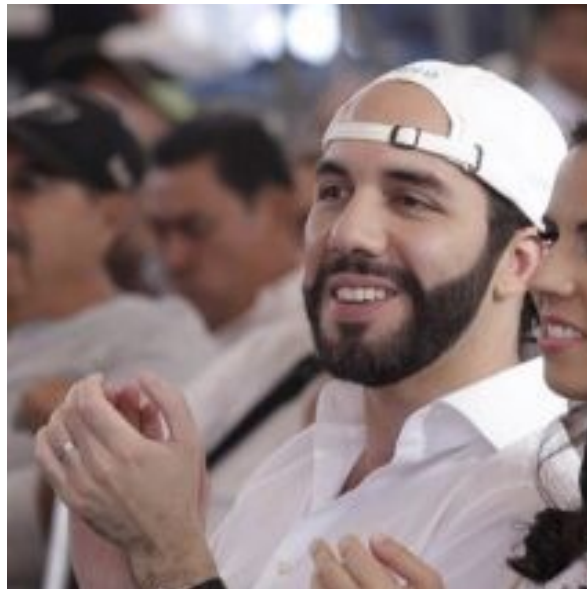


Photo: Nayib Bukele with his wife, Gabriela Rodríguez de Bukele. (Government of El Salvador, Wikimedia Commons / CC0 1.0)

In the 2021 parliamentary elections Bukele and his party, New Ideas, got the absolute majority with 56 seats of a total of 85. Four days after the election he maintained A long interview with the U.S. ambassador. One week then received a tweet from John Bolton, the Security Advisor. United States National. There were also congratulations from Juan Gaidó. Parliamentarians are not allowed to swear allegiance to the Salvadoran State in the investiture ceremony, but to him personally.

Bukele governs through social networks without written program and is, at least, a controversial figure. You no longer need the support of other parties and flouts all legal norms. Remove and appoint to your craving its judges and members of the Constitutional

Court. Those who are not With him, they are against him. It has suspended all social reforms initiated during the governments of Funés and Cerén.

Little before the commemoration of the 30th anniversary of The Peace Accords announced that the agreements are a "farce" and decided by presidential decree that, thereafter, on 16 January would commemorate the victims of the war. The commemoration The official of the Peace Accords was buried and officially forgotten.

Already No one knows how or Where to go. In the latest popularity poll – conducted by CID-Gallup – Bukele received 91% of the vote. Already nor does the United States know what to do with its fickle ally, but That doesn't mean you'll get cut off. funds. According to the most recent figures, still incomplete, the last year U.S. foreign aid to El Salvador amounted to \$110 million, of which \$97.6 million Channeled through USAID.

After of more than 60 years of military aid and "development aid" Approximately the RAND Institute will contemplate in your crystal ball the year 1991 when he concluded that he was deluded to think that the United States could create democracy in the foreigner.

Marleen Bosmans is a political scientist and worked for more than 40 years as a human rights expert in different areas of Belgium's international cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa and Asia.

Translation by the author of the article "El Salvador: niemand die nog weet hoe het verder moet", published by *De Wereld Morgen* on March 24, 2023 and published under the Creative Commons system <https://www.dewereldmorgen.be/artikel/2023/03/24/el-salvador-niemand-die-nog-weet-hoe-het-verder-moet/>

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Rebellion 18.05.2023