

THE CONAI AND THE GENERAL CRISIS IN THE PEACE PROCESS

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Although the work for Peace hasn't ended for those who have been part of the CONAI, its disappearance as an official body of mediators provides an opportunity to evaluate the Mexican process, its problems and challenges. As a first attempt at systematization, the present document assesses the Peace process from the mediators' point of view.

I. Bishop Don Samuel, Crux of Collective Civil Mediation

1. There are at present 58 domestic armed conflicts in the world. In spite of the peculiarities of each, there are constants and lessons to be learned. Although politics is always the detonating factor, in all conflicts religion is an indispensable part of the solution. Mediators are necessary for all conflicts. Only in extraordinary cases are the initial mediators international; this is more appropriate for the later stages of negotiations. In general, the tendency is to favor civil mediators, and of these, the most sought after are Catholic bishops.

There is the conviction that Church actors are more trustworthy since, not being political actors, their participation doesn't serve their projects or themselves. Although ecclesiastical actors are clearly distinguishable from political actors, ecclesiastical actors are typically attacked because political actors don't understand the Church or ecclesiastical actors, whom they need, treat and pressure as if they were political actors. This is the only way political actors are capable of relating to the Church. Furthermore, ecclesiastical actors generally are strong in zones of conflict, which are characterized by weak political actors and systems—one of the factors that explains the rise of rebellions in the first place. There is a contrast between the strength of the mediator and the weakness of political actors. Thus, it is virtually the norm for political actors to harass the mediators, accusing them of using their strength to control or substitute weak political actors. Ecclesiastical mediators' leadership and moral authority is taken as a synonym for control and the pretense of representing all other actors and movements.

This has happened to Don Samuel Ruiz García, Mexican Bishop of the Catholic Church in San Cristóbal de las Casas. Bishop Ruiz is committed to his people and faithful to the ecclesiastical process outlined in the Second Vatican Council, Medellín, Puebla and Santo Domingo. In all his activities, he has followed a profound pastoral mission emphasizing the dignity, rights and culture of indigenous peoples. His strength—and that of his Diocese and the fruits of his work—stands in stark contrast to the weakness of other actors. But this does not make him, as others have asserted, a political actor. He is an ecclesiastical actor with broad influence, especially for the congruency of his pastoral work with the needs and human, social and ecclesiastical rights of indigenous peoples.

Without a doubt, his religiosity, weight and moral authority, as well as his knowledge of the causes and actors in the conflict, led both Parties to call upon him to mediate the conflict and, as such, crux of the National Mediation Commission. On January 8, 1994, Don Samuel made public his acceptance.

2. To define and carry out his work, Don Samuel and a small group approached other experiences of Peace and Mediation in the first months of 1994. They encountered some first lessons that allowed them to conceive an initial frame of reference.
 - a) Whenever a conflict exists, whatever its causes, it is never possible to solve it returning to the former situation. Conflicts in some way reveal and, at the same time, create irreversible processes that generate new situations and require profound changes. It is impossible to return to the previous status that explains the violence. Only in confronting the causes may Peace be built.

Where conflicts have arisen, political means and bodies have failed to represent society and resolve disputes. Conflicts also reveal structural flaws and deficiencies in political and social actors. Armed conflicts and Peace may not be resolved except by finding new ways to form and strengthen political and

social actors. Stopping war is very different from building Peace. This can't be done without involving all political and social actors necessary to resolve the causes of the conflict.

Peace is not only negotiation, nor mediation the only civil or ecclesiastical service in favor of Peace. All processes go through different stages and have different needs. Civil and church participation is valid not only during the initial stages of negotiation; rather, civil and ecclesiastical participation is fundamental throughout the process.

Although Mediation should orient itself toward Peace by achieving a political agreement between the Parties to the armed conflict, its deepest and most difficult task is building Peace as a process of change. This process must be oriented by the fulfillment of the accords in the deepest sense and guaranteed by an authentic ceasing of the military confrontation. It is during this long process, including compliance, verification, reconciliation, reconstruction and change, that the churches' role is fundamental. Mediation, then, does not end with dialogue between the actors in the armed conflict to stop the war, but should work to generate conditions for all civil political and social actors to become co-responsible co-participants in the agreements to build Peace.

The mediators must locate their strategy in the middle term tasks of true reconciliation and reconstructing the causes of the conflict. They must thus diversify their social links and involve the most diverse forces and tendencies in the process of change. Given the key role of the mediators, who are generally subject to numerous attacks be explained by polarization resulting from the conflict, it is very important that concrete Mediation services enjoy continental and worldwide support.

- b) Domestic armed conflicts mainly explode in the so-called third world, since the causes are generally linked to crises of models, unjust situations, lack of democracy and violations of human and social rights. When it is suggested that Peace may not be built without addressing the causes of conflict, this reflection leads to the conclusion that Peace may not be reached in third world conflicts without engendering a new social and political stage guided by a new conception of and model for the state. States and social development models have failed where armed conflicts exist.

Furthermore, the worst situations in the world are precisely those where conflicts are exploding. It would seem, then, that there is a worldwide structural problem.

Although it is correct to observe the national dimension of Peace processes and the need to strengthen local actors, it is also true that the world situation—concretely, the First World—must be recognized as co-responsible of both causes and just solutions to conflicts. It is not possible to promote Peace processes separately when the conflicts have not been caused by isolated processes. Peace is a world problem, as well as the causes of the conflicts. Similarly, countries must recognize conflicts as national instead of considering them local problems, even though there haven't been outbreaks of military conflict throughout the country.

The agreements to halt the war and endorse Peace, in addition to being understood as the end of the military period, should further be understood as the beginning of a civil stage of political construction of Peace. They must therefore be assumed and shared by key actors in building change, and not just by key actors in stopping war.

This is another observation confirmed worldwide: Peace is not just the job of military actors, of those who confronted one another; it is also a difficult, transforming process which should include the goals and influence of all actors (communities, organizations, parties, universities, media, etc.) linked to the conflict.

The negotiating stage is perhaps the briefest and most intense in the Peace process. The processes of reconstruction and reconciliation are the longest, and become even more complex if they don't include in the negotiation phase those actors and methods whose absence explains the outburst of violence. Peace is an opportunity for new projects with new subjects.

- c) Although mediation is a civil service, the trustworthiness that churches enjoy in conflicts is due not to the fact that they make up for the weakness or defects of political and social actors. Mediation and Peace services rendered by the churches by their own specificity, identity and mission. The churches' distinct character—ethical, not political—is recognized. This trustworthiness is due to the churches' ability to serve

disinterestedly. They may contribute in an objective, committed and impartial manner to Peace in any role required throughout the stages of the process.

Mediation attaches to concrete persons, since trust in dialogue and negotiation processes is expressed through individuals. In general, however, local churches accept Mediation and Peace services as a joint task. Although Bishops and ecclesiastical agencies are autonomous, they tend not to act in isolation. There are many variants and models of how churches back and take on concrete mediation roles. In any event, it has been well established that, in spite of tension and differences, the churches accompany those churchmen entrusted with the job of providing mediation services. This ecclesiastical unity strengthens the ability to accept and withstand difficult situations and pressure to which the mediators are submitted in most conflicts. When Mediation is an ecclesiastical task, it must be understood, assumed and supported in ecclesiastical and pastoral work.

Furthermore, the civil service of Mediation is founded upon ecclesiastical ministry. Mediation is not a political task removed from the churches' work for Peace. That the Church's and its bishops' performance is founded upon their own episcopal and pastoral ministry is justifiable and explicable: they lend their trustworthiness and service based on their ministry. Given the prophetic call to conversion, Peace and Mediation are an opportunity and challenge for Evangelization. There is no neutrality on this point. The churches may participate in Mediation roles because their prophetic dimension enables them to promote more freely the commitments and changes required for Peace, in terms of justice and democracy.

Churches are able to issue ethical calls for the Parties in armed conflict to transfer their struggle to political terrain. Furthermore, if direct actors in the armed conflict aren't the only ones capable of building Peace, churches can encourage generosity and a change of heart in all society to accept the changes that are necessary to address the causes of armed conflict.

Churches are necessary. Defending life and dignity; ethical encouragement to a generous transformation; calls to peace; the impulse toward demilitarization; procuring justice; calling for a new stage of development; strengthening a new democratic culture: all these are tasks proper to the ecclesiastical Mission. Mediation then becomes an important evangelical testimony and service to society.

With these ideas, Don Samuel began intense work in contributing and learning reciprocally. Even when on October 13, 1994, he himself proposed expanding the CONAI to give it a more civil character, Don Samuel did not give up being a Bishop or acting as such. The CONAI has offered civil, collective mediation, working for peace with the diverse strengths, contributions and identities of its members.

3. On the inside, the CONAI went through two main stages. The first began on January 8, 1994, when the only member was Don Samuel, aided by four experts invited by him. The second began on October 13 of the same year, when Don Samuel proposed in his "New Political Initiative for Peace" to include other civil personages to strengthen the CONAI's mediating activities and abilities.

As new members, two Chiapanecan poets have distinguished themselves for their participation in and support of popular and indigenous causes: Juan Bañuelos and Óscar Oliva. A prestigious political scientist and social researcher, ex-Regent of the UNAM and educator on democratic processes: Don Pablo González Casanova. An indefatigable fighter for citizen causes, founder of civil movements in the country: Doña Conchita Calvillo, widow of Dr. Salvador Nava. An international jurist and career diplomat, expert in negotiations and expert on the Mexican state: Dr. Alberto Székely. Inseparable companion of Don Alfonso García Robles, Mexican diplomat awarded the Nobel Prize Peace for his efforts against the arms race and violence: Doña Juana María de Szyszlo de García Robles. And an acute analyst, close to indigenous problems in Chiapas and promoter of community programs in applied technology: Dr. Raymundo Sánchez Barraza.

In our General Secretariat: then Vicar General of the Diocese of San Cristóbal and ex-priest in Ocosingo: Friar Gonzalo Ituarte. A committed layman with experience in various ecclesiastical, civil and political ambits: Miguel Álvarez Gándara. Ex-seminarian with many years of community work in Chiapas: Salvador Reyes García. And a professional, as an expression of citizens' will to listen to and support indigenous rights: Pedro Nava Calvillo. As advisors, two brilliant democratic lawyers with dignified trajectories: Jorge Fernández Souza and Enrique Flota Ocampo.

All experienced mediating service intensely, in generous, responsible and cooperative fashion. The different identifies and experiences made for a highly qualified and unified collective. Reasoning, analyzing options, debating, they provided the civil and ecclesiastical service to Peace. As it became necessary, the CONAI formed different teams of advisors for specific studies, discreetly put together with experts from the most diverse social, academic and political fields.

During the two stages, the CONAI was recognized by both Parties. In the first stage, the Federal Government was the first to solicit Don Samuel as mediator, while in the second, the EZLN first accepted the wider civil dimension of the CONAI. The Government did so on December 23, 1994, but always prioritizing Don Samuel above the rest of the collective.

As in all Mediations, the legal personality of the CONAI was fundamentally based on an explicit, public agreement between the Parties. Later, the “Dialogue, Conciliation and Just Peace in Chiapas Act” (March 11, 1995), followed by different legal instruments agreed upon and signed by the Parties, defined the principles, agenda, rules and procedures for dialogue and negotiation and the San Andrés Table.

Through all their work, Don Samuel and all the members of the CONAI promoted Peace, which they understood as a political and social process to generate and incorporate actors, agreements, conditions and changes necessary to address the national causes of conflict. Mediation has been an instrument to ensure that negotiation between the Parties was oriented toward building such a Peace process.

The CONAI, thus, always mediated the negotiations within the framework of other actions and needs for the Peace process. In the same was, our proposals and procedures for dialogue and negotiation have always linked the San Andrés Table to other actors, agendas, conflicts and needs for the Peace process throughout the country.

II.- Character of the Conflict and the San Andrés Model

- 1.- The armed conflict in Chiapas represents a **new type of conflict** that reflects, on the one hand, a crisis in the nation-state and, on the other, the search for alternatives to exclusive globalization. We’re not dealing with the old kind of conflicts and actors, explicable by the objective of taking power through implementing revolutionary programs, but rather a new problem with diverse causes. The roots of the conflict are linked to political factors that have unleashed armed violence as a reaction to the impossibility of resolving some actors’ causes, projects and spaces through political means. These conflicts, which require military options without exhausting them, refer to fundamental aspects of the structural crisis, suggesting the need to activate all national forces to promote substantive, constitutional and peaceful change.

In Chiapas, this new type of conflict is expressed as armed conflict to bring about political conditions for change and resolution of essential problems. It does not presuppose that the armed actors possess a program or capacity to govern. The EZLN has opened a new generation and type of armed movement. A new type of armed movement within a new type of conflict. It is not an ethnic conflict, in spite of the fact that the EZLN is an indigenous movement rooted primarily in defending dignity, given that its causes and demands are more widely civil, democratic and national –including the rights of indigenous peoples.

Correctly characterizing the Chiapas conflict is very important because to speak of new types of conflicts implies acknowledging that the way in which old types of conflicts have been dealt with no longer works for either conceptualizing or resolving new types of conflicts. Once armed conflict began, the old conflicts required that both parties use their military capacity to the fullest until exhausted or sated. Once a party achieved a political-military stature it could not reach through normal political action, a second stage –political negotiation— could be opened as the only way reap the progress sown in the military stage. Thus, these old conflicts in a certain way required that the military stage reach a peak of maturity. A solid, definitive political solution could not be constructed until military force had been expended, when the Parties, situated in a painful tie, no longer stood to gain anything.

The point is that this new type of conflict –such as Chiapas, which the state and federal governments have attempted to reduce to a local problem, not realizing that although armed violence hasn’t spread to the national level, the cause does in fact implicate national realities—leads us to question whether it is necessary

to exhaust military options in order to achieve conditions for a political solution. That is, if it is necessary for military conflict to become nationwide before it is understood that there are causes and necessities to be resolved at the national level. Don Samuel and the CONAI have insisted that it is not necessary to wait for expansion or exhaustion of the military dimension to decide in favor of aperture toward political solution of the causes.

The atypical drama Chiapas has suffered may be explained by the fact that military options have neither disappeared nor matured. After the cease-fire, since January 12, 1994, the military capacity of the parties is alive and intact. Although the EZLN hasn't continued with its armed action, neither has it disarmed. Although the federal government says that it is only acting for peace and order, it has in fact continued the war and gone through various phases of its military operations, not only against the Zapatista armed front but also the indigenous bases that support the armed corps. The conflict is still military, and the dispute over its nature and the type of political solutions.

The true phenomenon is that the status of the conflict continues to be "Armed Internal Conflict", a conflict of which its military character is the predominant component for the strategies and analyses both parties formulate—apart from how public opinion views the conflict, another terrain in dispute. In the inner circles of the parties, the truth is that both recognize the dispute as active armed conflict, with a declaration of war in effect, and increasingly deteriorating. Although political solutions have been attempted, all negotiations (talks in the Cathedral, San Andrés dialogue, parallel efforts) have fallen by the wayside, given that it is not possible to construct a political solution while the state's will is subordinate to the logic and attitude of its military actors. The crisis in the peace process is the responsibility of the Mexican state and government. A strategic decision has been made to use the army as a factor of stability in defeating the enemy of the old conflict, while the government sets forth limited solutions on the margin of that conflict.

A brief parenthesis is appropriate to argue this point. Modern states in general don't like it when an armed movement arises and tries to wrench concessions that it doesn't wish to grant even to legal actors or parties. Then, two large trends emerge: those who propose squashing the undesirable new species, and those who suggest the need to encourage this species to change into another, that is, a political actor. These two lines were disputed within the Mexican government in 1994. It is public knowledge—and army spokesmen have left no room for doubt that this has happened—that the cease-fire declared on January 12, 1994, greatly annoyed the Mexican Army. For the Army, halting a military operation whose success was guaranteed even without favorable strategic positions, and in exchange for a mere political adventure, was a historic error. The Army suggested negotiating with then-candidate Zedillo to assure that he would not again curb the operation while no mature political alternative existed. Therefore, the Army—with Zedillo now as president—prepared the February 5, 1995, operation, thereby becoming the fundamental element on the route toward a political solution.

The problem, then, is that the order of factors is backwards; politics are not guiding the logic of military action. In the government's plan, military strategy is conditioning, defining and reducing the room for a political solution.

Thus, an old solution to a supposedly old type of conflict predominates in the Mexican state and government's conception and operation. Instead of understanding that the new type of conflict requires betting, definitively, on a political way out, the government's current strategy assumes that military factors will determine the counterpart's weight and the type of solution. The key is in recognizing the cause!

- 2.- Throughout the more than 50 phases through which the peace process has gone since 1994, there have been basically two models of dialogue and negotiation. The first worked through the so-called "*Talks in the Cathedral*", held from February to June, 1994. The second, known as the "*San Andrés Table*", burgeoned throughout 1995; in October, negotiations commenced on the seven topics agreed upon by the Parties. Initially as a complement, and sometimes as a supplement, the COCOPA ran the so-called "parallel way".

Except for the "parallel way", in both models—during and between the phases—the CONAI served to witness, convoke, guaranty and methodologically guide the dialogue, in hopes of inspiring confidence between the parties to transition from military to political confrontation in order to advance the objectives of peace.

Our methodological guidance tasks simultaneously guaranteed our impartiality and fair play for the good of indigenous communities, as well as the possibility of dialogue and negotiation for the government. This task

turned out to be so crucial that, understandably, strong tension occurred for the CONAI to approach the strategic postures of each of the parties. This tension also occurred on the COCOPA's role, both externally and internally.

The CONAI's profound impartiality made sense as long as the thrust was for the Parties to agree on promoting, neither neutrally nor passively, serious negotiation oriented toward national solution of the conflict's causes –that is, oriented toward solid, just and lasting peace.

The transition from military to political confrontation required dispute at the Table between all elements involved in negotiations. To this end, it was necessary to establish institutionality and normativity that would be guaranteed by the dialogue and negotiation model agreed upon, including fulfilling rules and procedures. The mediators would oversee the path and procedures. The content and rhythm would be the responsibility of the Parties in dispute.

- 3.- We have learned that peace isn't just negotiation between the parties in conflict; that negotiation is the fruit of transition from military confrontation to political confrontation between the parties; and that negotiation is necessary to promote peace as a process that incorporates all actors and factors necessary to fulfill accords that resolve the underlying causes of the conflict.

For this double task of negotiation and peace, a model was set forth in San Andrés to help move the confrontation to political terrain, but also advance the process generally, not just the peace agreement to be signed by the parties, but also peace driven by society. This meant bringing the parties to agreement on fundamental elements such as defining what type of negotiation and what type of peace. These understandings are, at present, broken.

We have also learned that in all conflicts, there are always disputes over the conception of and conditions for negotiation and peace, since the conceptions of peace stem from the diagnoses made by each party. For those who diagnose the conflict as a local problem, the conception of peace implies solving local problems. For those who diagnose the conflict as an indigenous problem, peace lies in indigenous solutions, and so on. In general, the parties dispute their diagnoses, and peace processes are furthered when society converges upon a diagnosis that provides stability and reference for the dispute between the parties. The problem is that our society has not converged upon a diagnosis, since this is ground in which the parties seek to win a social base over to their respective diagnoses.

Thus, while the government says, "Chiapas is a lamentable set of local problems deriving from poverty," --and now adds that "they don't require substantive, national negotiation with an armed corps, but rather local government programs"— the EZLN insists that Chiapas is a reflection of grave national problems that require a national negotiating agenda and nationwide change. There are two different conceptions of negotiations and peace here. On top of this, the government, using a logic of state, believes only in rapid negotiations that don't weaken other agendas, substitute other spaces or become a great national negotiation that puts other disputes and actors at risk.

That is, the natural posture of the Government favors rapid negotiations reduced to military topics and oriented toward giving military actors an out, but which doesn't solve the causes –whether by vanishing them or bringing them back as political and electoral actors. The EZLN, on the contrary, desires a long, verified and profound negotiation on the causes of the conflict (for the country to change as a result of privileged dialogue and struggle with the government, through negotiations that unite other actors and ruptures within the natural political terrain).

All this is reflected in what is known as the "model for dialogue and negotiation", which is the methodological concretion of procedures to carry out negotiations. To define the model and type of accords and guarantees generated by negotiations, the type of peace and type of negotiation are disputed, beginning with the diagnosis and characterization of the conflict.

- 4.- The "Talks in the Cathedral" were the first model put into operation during February and March, 1994, when President Salinas's Commissioner for Peace was Manuel Camacho. Although the dialogue was open, we termed the negotiations a "window model", since the government limited itself to receiving a list of petitions, internally defining its responses, and then offering them to the Zapatista movement. It never negotiated causes, diagnoses or responses. The solutions were offered in two packages, one consisting of 32 two

responses to the “window” manned by Zapatista actors and the other in 15 working commissions that would operate with other actors in the natural political terrain. This model failed, which obliged all actors in the process to undertake strategic adjustments.

The Government’s main adjustment was allowing the February 9, 1995, military action to proceed, which established that the Mexican Army would not subordinate itself to the Interior Secretary or wait for it to generate conditions for a political solution. On the contrary, the Army ensured that it would guaranty the state the military situation most desirable for then constructing a political out. This situation, nevertheless, didn’t prevent a second model, which had been proposed since December, 1994, from maturing. This model would become the basis for the “Dialogue, Conciliation and Dignified Peace in Chiapas Act”, passed on March 11, 1995. That is, this law backed the fundamental features of the San Andrés model, except in Article 13, which left military logic and action at large. The Model and Law were contravened by the reality of an unfavorable balance of forces, with the federal army in the process of increasing autonomy.

This second model was based on a certain conception of negotiation and peace: that peace requires, but is not limited to, the transition from military confrontation to political confrontation between the Parties. If the rebellions and conflicts may be explained by deep causes, and surge forth because of vacuums and weaknesses in political, economic and social paths and actors, peace is above all else a process of addressing the causes, constructing actors and generating trust. Therefore, peace requires, but is not only, negotiation between the parties in conflict, but the political construction of accords, processes and spaces that link all actors necessary to solve the causes of the conflict.

Thus, the San Andrés Table is conceived of as a space for political dispute. It is designed exactly to foster dialogue and negotiation between all elements of the confrontation between the government and the EZLN, in a process that also unites other actors and agendas. In this sense, instead of negotiation limited to the parties in conflict –as the peace were solely the responsibility of the warring parties— the San Andrés model wove links between the EZLN-Government negotiation and other agendas, dynamics and actors in national political life.

Based on this model, the special law establishes mutual recognition between the Federal Government and the EZLN as parties necessary to negotiate a seven-item agenda of substantive topics. The results of the negotiation would be incorporated into a “Agreement on Concord and Peace with Justice and Dignity”, which would make reality the solutions proposed to solve the causes of the conflict. The law acknowledges the EZLN as a movement of Mexicans, mostly indigenous, in dissent. Finally, it defines an institutional framework for peace (COCOPA, COSEVER, and “the mediating body recognized by the Parties”).

The CONAI’s fundamental task in the San Andrés dialogue and negotiation process has been methodological guidance toward the “Concord and Pacification Agreement”. This is one of the key lessons we learned from other peace processes, and also from other negotiations between governments and indigenous groups. The constant is that where the government conducts the methodology, agenda, rules and rhythms, although indigenous movements participate, they end up losing in the negotiation’s outcome, since the government leads them toward the type of solution it desires.

The key for the Chiapas negotiations, then, lay in that the parties entrusted methodological guidance to the CONAI, although this also meant accepting that the dispute and pressure between the Parties would embrace its mediation. Thus, all public and private pressure on the CONAI was inevitable, since they concerned the role and intense, delicate labor it has fulfilled as mediator in Mexico.

Furthermore, there are other explanations for the pressure: that possible mediation centered on a Bishop committed to his people, and that faced with the causes of conflict and the type of peace necessary, Don Samuel and the CONAI constituted impartial, but not neutral, mediation. It is necessary to distinguish neutrality from impartiality and passiveness. The CONAI was not neutral because it was committed to a conception of peace linked to resolving the causes. Fostering a strictly fair and dignified solution is the commitment that has guided Don Samuel Ruiz and the CONAI.

Impartiality is distinct. Given the CONAI’s relative autonomy and distance with respect to each of the Parties’ leaders and strategies, it implies a flexible axis of gravity that guarantees movement for both Parties. This was our commitment to methodological guidance: that the Parties enter into political, and therefore, effective dispute. Given the disparity of military weight of the Parties, the key hasn’t lain in being equidistant from the

Parties, but in consistency and firmness in guaranteeing true peace through political dispute at the negotiating table. That was our commitment, although the parties always reserved the right to move or remove the mediating axis.

5.- There are six strategic assumptions for San Andrés. Analyzing them helps explain why the San Andrés model is in crisis, who put it in crisis, and who benefits from the crisis in the negotiation model.

a) The first assumption is that *the more political logic advanced, the more military logic would recede*. Certainly, political logic progressed to the point of reaching agreements on the first of the seven topics, but military logic and action not only failed to recede, but diversified, grew and generated the dangerous phenomenon of military groups, accelerating secondary contradictions.

We believe that the military strategy, which has sustained the state's entire strategy, has also been a factor around which the government has woven its dispute for moving the status of the conflict. The status of a conflict initially recognized as armed between the Government and the EZLN is not the same as that of a complex conflict reduced to the Chiapas government against the EZLN; and even less so, that of a local conflict between indigenous organizations and the EZLN. In thus reducing the status of the conflict, the government and army want to recover their ability to act not as actors of war, but as actors that guaranty order and stability. So, reducing the status is related to the government's posture concerning the diagnosis, character and nature of the conflict —on which, to be sure, it has grounded its diplomatic work— where military tasks enjoy hegemony over the necessities of political logic. In this way, neither negotiation nor peace has been able to progress.

b) The second assumption is that *the greater the progress at the negotiating table, the greater the progress in the peace process as a whole*. In the process of incorporating all actors that have to do with causes of and solutions to the conflict, peace must be a process where the strategy is much broader than mere negotiation. San Andrés contains an integral strategy that gives it political meaning as a cohesive force for negotiation, and which provides room for minor conflicts linked to the circuit of main actors.

Here, we are faced with a governmental strategy that instead of promoting linkage of the primary negotiation with other actors and conflicts, disjointed and desynchronized: for each conflict, a partial commission, a special plan, etc. The government managed to desynchronize the Table from the rest of the Chiapas problem. Thus, we find today that polarization has increased; today there are more conflicts and more actors living a logic of violence; today the crisis is such that not even by rehabilitating negotiations between the Government and the EZLN —extremely difficult—could we affirm that the peace process would be simultaneously rehabilitated. The two processes are linked, but out of sync at present. The CONAI long ago took on its mediation labor for the peace process as a whole, and not merely the specific task of negotiations between the parties. This was set down in San Andrés. The principles, rules and law itself establish the goal of negotiation was oriented toward the process of pacification, the main challenge established and accepted by the parties.

c) The third assumption is *incorporating civil society as an actor in negotiation as well as pacification*. The images of the San Andrés plenary where the Government, EZLN, CONAI and COCOPA delegations appear are widely known. But these images do not reflect the true negotiation process. There were several work formats, although in general, each Party would go back to its office and it was the CONAI that “built bridges, oiled and absorbed shocks”; that is, more than the dialogue itself, what San Andrés facilitated were conditions for negotiation. In terms of content, the key was for civil society to provide the material for negotiation, through advisors and guests that worked in groups on sub-themes.

The proposals were so divergent that the only way to progress was for advisors and guests invited by the Parties to work on five of the nine steps to be negotiated on each topic. The Parties were able to approach one another and reach agreements based on the advisors' work. Thus, on the first topic, the Government agreed to incorporate advisors and guests whose role was fundamental in arriving at the first agreements on indigenous culture and rights. Ominously, the Government didn't arrive to the second round with advisors and invitees. Quite simply, the possibility of reaching agreements was frustrated without advisors.

Besides impeding civil society from becoming an actor at the negotiating table, it was difficult for civil society to become a key actor in the broader reconciliation process. Instead of providing guarantees for

civil participation in easing tensions in Chiapas conflict zones, the government has persecuted those who have mobilized in the name of peace. In spite of this, civil participation will continue to be a fundamental buttress of the model and process for peace necessary in Mexico.

- d) The fourth assumption is the *simultaneity of negotiation with fulfillment and verification*. In other processes, negotiations generally continue until a final agreement is reached. Upon signing the agreement, the scaffolding that sustained the relationship between the Parties is torn down, and a follow-up and verification commission established, which is frequently unable to guaranty fulfillment of the accords. On other occasions, the accords have been reached within models that didn't seek to guaranty fulfillment; rather, they attempted to convert the agreements into spaces or instruments for struggle, but without guaranteeing fulfillment. In the Mexican case, guarantees and commitments were established to begin fulfillment of the agreements, and verification of compliance, after negotiations were concluded on each of the seven topics. In this way, compliance and verification would lubricate negotiation on the remaining topics. Of course, if the Government hinders compliance and verification of agreements on the first topic, negotiations are brought to a halt on the following themes. After the Follow-Up and Verification Commission was installed in September, 1996, it has yet to hold its first working meeting.
- e) The fifth assumption is the *link between Chiapas and the national situation*, where the "negotiation process would set a good example and encourage other national changes." Nevertheless, as we pointed out above, the governmental dispute over diagnoses and status prevailed, reducing the conflict and negotiation to a local agenda.
- f) Finally, the sixth assumption referred to the *COCOPA's and CONAI's roles*, although they weren't respected as established, to the point of becoming an aid for the "parallel way" –besides San Andrés and the CONAI—promoted by the Government and the COCOPA.

To be sure, the COCOPA represents one of the novelties of the "Mexican case", since it is a way of involving Congress and national political parties in the search for political solutions and avoiding a military solution. That is its virtue, proved through three important contributions to the process: linking San Andrés and the EZLN to the process of reforming the state; holding national forums in the EZLN discussed its postures with other civil forces, to later negotiate them with the Government; and dialogue with governmental agencies to overcome specific incidents and tension that the process has gone through.

A political actor other than ecclesiastic and civil actors –in this case, the COCOPA—is necessary. Distinct tasks, compositions and identities are appropriate for these commissions. While a political actor's responsibility is precisely to contribute political initiatives, the mediator's work lies precisely in not being a political actor, but rather witness, guarantor and vehicle that, in the midst of the mistrust between the Parties, generates trust in guiding procedures, efforts and commitments to peace. Nevertheless, harmonious action between both commissions was constantly obstructed by the government's strategy.

- 6.- As is readily seen, the second model for dialogue and negotiation agreed upon in Mexico gathers together experiences from similar processes in other countries, particularly in Latin America. This model has attempted to advance an inclusive social process oriented toward pacification, understood as solving the causes of the conflict. The San Andrés Table would be the regulation space for a political struggle between peers, and would fundamentally work on searching for commitments and agreements toward a real and essential solution for the conflict.

The process, then, would oversee several dimensions: the strictly internal dynamic of what the parties express and dispute at the Table; the link between this Table and other terrains and scenarios of action and strategy for the parties; and also the real link between this Table and the parties' strategies for general pacification, that is to say, with other conflicts and actors implicated in national causes and solutions for the principal and general conflict.

Thus, this model requires action toward military detente to the extent that political consolidation progresses; civil participation as a co-responsible actor in the negotiation and peace process; simultaneous, verified compliance with agreements throughout negotiations on the seven items to be treated successively. That is, the model is put together well and contains a global vision, where everything is interrelated within a political solution to the causes of the conflict.

Nonetheless, to the extent that national linkage, civil participation, military detente and compliance with the agreements were hindered, the model as a whole also came to a halt. If it works, everything works; if some central aspect doesn't work, secondary elements also won't work. The consensus arrived at by the parties was to further all areas and aspects necessary. However, the government has not fulfilled its responsibilities as agreed upon.

Thus, the political dispute again passed through a methodological problem. The model and conditions for negotiation are again at risk. Since 1996, two postures and problems have arisen: if the problem is the model itself, or if the problem lies in the conditions for guaranteeing compliance with the model. This would mean that, in the first case, reestablishing dialogue implies first renegotiating the model, agenda, method, procedures and schedule for negotiations. In the second case, it would mean that before the negotiating dynamic could be recouped, the parties should establish conditions, adjustments and guarantees to fulfill the model agreed upon in San Andrés.

Today, the dispute is between maintaining San Andrés as a viable, reformable model, or imposing a third model. The EZLN halted its military action, but grew political in its capacity to convoke national actors and agendas, thus winning in importance, content and national representativeness at the Table. The third model to which the government aspires means returning to the old conflicts: recognizing the EZLN only as an armed force, not as an indigenous movement nor as capable of convoking and articulating national agendas and actors, and reducing negotiation not to substantive causes and agendas—which are denominated local and held to be government's unilateral responsibility for resolving—but to the fact and effects of the armed uprising.

The Mexican government has violated Article 11 of the March 11, 1995, law that recognizes the EZLN as a movement of mostly indigenous Mexicans in dissent. The government must recognize the EZLN in the terms of this article as a counterpart necessary to negotiate an agenda oriented toward solving the causes of the conflict, as established in the law and signed in the body of rules of the game and procedures in San Andrés. Using elements of its diagnosis and characterization, the government has broken away from the San Andrés accords to militarily push a limited negotiation that reduces the agenda to changing the EZLN into a military actor.

Given the impasse and crisis in San Andrés, the CONAI has since 1996 opened other areas and terrains necessary for the peace process, although they weren't part of the immediate negotiation dynamic. Thus, promoting reconciliation, civil participation and international observation were activities undertaken by the CONAI that profoundly disturbed the Government, which in any event was attempting to dissolve de facto the model set down in San Andrés. A procedure and agenda was established to articulate the main actors and convoke other actors in the conflict. But in practice, the state has provoked not only a crisis in this model, but also implementation of a different solution measured by the momentary balance of forces.

Therefore, the CONAI took on defense of the San Andrés Model, not because the CONAI has a greater stake in the model, but because the model contains greater guarantees for truly solving the causes of the conflict. Reorienting the peace process and fortifying the dialogue and negotiation model agreed upon have been the CONAI's strategic tasks. Recovering centrality and national linkage for the peace and democracy process was a daily task in 1997-1998.

III. The Parallel Way, the 1996-97 Crisis and Acteal

1. The current model of San Andrés possesses features and innovations that surprise experts of other processes. It is a model that has learned from other conflicts, although its unfolding and maturing (that is, incorporation of other elements and terrains of political struggle) wasn't gradually regulated. Thus, the tension was greater in certain aspects (for example, the press or international relations), since there weren't criteria agreed upon to handle the disputes. Neither the Parties nor the mediation worked the same in the different aspects and terrains of the struggle. These tensions affected the model. The Federal Government began in 1996 to negotiate through other channels, with more immediate effects that favored its military advantage and reduced political will.

Thus, in this complex, diverse context of fields of action and problems, the so-called “parallel way” prospered in 1996. The COCOPA’s work became a another track of negotiation, audaciously undertaken to overcome critical situations. In this path, which at first complemented and facilitated San Andrés, the Presidency and Interior Secretariat sought confidential and substantive negotiations between October and December 1996. The object was to arrive at a political-military agreement before the 1994 federal elections. Without the San Andrés methodology and the CONAI’s participation –a condition imposed by the Government—this confidential negotiation is key in understanding the crisis in the process. When the agreed upon package of measures failed to prosper, one of its basic elements was mired: the Constitutional reform regarding the San Andrés Agreements on Topic 1, Indigenous Rights and Culture. San Andrés was thus paralyzed, the “parallel way” failed, and the Zapatistas lost confidence in the seriousness and conditions for negotiation. The COCOPA came out of this weakened due its role in the failure, and the CONAI lost ground by not having participated. Compliance with the constitutional Reform then became the factor that expressed, synthesized and defined various disputes. The impasse began in January 1997.

With San Andrés tied in knots and the “parallel way” exhausted, the dispute shifted in 1997 to a confrontation of strategies to define the conditions, sense and limits of dialogue and negotiation. While the EZLN, mediation and support stayed within the logic of the procedures defined in the San Andrés Agreements, still in effect, the Government weakened and disavowed the accords. Alternative models are valid, as long as they result from agreements and not a unilateral, de facto decision. The Federal Government heightened the tension with the CONAI to the extent that it detached itself from the procedures and implications of San Andrés. The CONAI became an obstacle for the Government because instead of encouraging separation, we urged and summoned the Government to fulfill the agreements, adhering to the ways and rules of dialogue in force, and not confrontation or unilateral decisions.

2. Understanding what happened in 1996 and 1997 is necessary to comprehend the present moment and perspectives for the future. In 1997, it wasn’t possible to stop the deterioration and open a new stage of military detente. What happened was that the impasse broadened and became more complex. The consequences were increased military and paramilitary violence. The state displayed more intensely its ability fabricate a social base for solving and managing problems, strengthening the Chiapas state government’s role through social programs, supported by the Army and various federal agencies. The regional counterinsurgency model essayed in the Northern Zone expanded throughout all zones in Chiapas.

The government again changed the status of the conflict through its PRI militants, creating paramilitary forces that accelerated conflicts between communities. Another distortion was created in the status of the conflict, its nature and the composition of the Parties, actors and roles.

The apparent “devolution of leadership” to the state governor, who called upon the political and economic powers that be in Chiapas to expand their participation, multiplied paramilitarization as the way in which power groups took the conflict upon themselves. These groups financed and gave impunity to armed groups among the PRI’s indigenous base to confront the EZLN in different municipalities. The so-called Low Intensity Warfare –dirty war or counterinsurgency, as it is commonly known in civil media-- became more visible.

Given this situation, the EZLN also unfolded its own actions and initiatives, consolidating its base and local strength. It prioritized the spread and operation of rebel municipalities, taking cover in the government’s failure to comply with the San Andrés Agreements. The government responded to the intensification of rebel municipalities by extending its campaign against civil groups and autonomous figures that had come forth, applying the model of local paramilitary conflicts.

Thus, in August 1997, tensions and secondary contradictions intensified between indigenous organizations and communities. All this was fomented by a climate of polarization and the “strategy to weaken and isolate the rebel movement.”

Inevitably, the diocesan Church, fully involved in an attempted reconciliation, became more visible, which displeases political and military actors. Alongside this, the Mexican Church made strides in its process of recovering autonomy with respect to the Federal Government. The Apostolic Nuncio also began its work with indications and proposals on Chiapas that were consonant with its diplomatic role, that is, in relation to the Federal Government. The Episcopal Commission for Peace and Reconciliation also diversified its

relationships and proposal. This produced signals that created mistrust in the Zapatistas, which contributed toward exhausting the Church as a basis for trustworthy mediation.

In spite of the fact that Don Samuel, with the support of Bishop Coadjutor Msgr. Raúl Vera, had shifted a great part of his time and pastoral effort toward reconciliation, he was again thrust in the eye of the hurricane. Increasing tensions—as well as the EZLN's reading of the new Nuncio's actions, linking it to movements and contacts the Government's Commissioner had opened with different actors—explain a public EZLN communiqué that at the end of November accused the Apostolic Nuncio (understood as the head of the Mexican Church's hierarchy) of promoting with the Government a strategy of war against the EZLN. While the EZLN made public its feeling the ecclesiastical hierarchy was prone to the government's position, the Government and its army continued to suggest that the Don Samuel's diocesan ecclesiasticalism had proclivities towards the Zapatistas.

Thus, the situation was very difficult for the CONAI, faced with a Government unwilling to correct its strategy but which felt it had won the war of words with its willingness to immediate dialogue; and faced with an EZLN that, on the contrary, felt that any call to dialogue meant complicity with the Government if the EZLN were to accede by withdrawing pressure on the Government for it to fulfill its commitments and minimum conditions guarantying confidence in the negotiation. Any action on the CONAI's part was interpreted unfavorably by one of the Parties, if not both. Although we did not name it as such, the CONAI was aware in October of a crisis in which mediation had been left behind.

As is known, on November 4, 1997, the convoy accompanying Don Samuel and Don Raúl in their pastoral visit to the Northern Zone was attacked. On November 6, in her own home, Don Samuel's sister was gravely injured by hammer blows. The criminal investigation of both cases has been pursued coldly. The highest authorities display a worrisome disdain, refusing any inquiry that might impede the local strategy they are supporting.

3. Meanwhile, the tension in Chenalhó had begun, warning of the Acteal massacre. The formal PRI municipality and the rebel Zapatista municipality cohabit in Actea. The Bees, an independent indigenous organization that explicitly disavows armed violence, experienced the tension implied by being a force apart from the Parties in conflict. A productive cooperative close to the Diocese's pastoral life, The Bees reacted with prayer to the violence. Their religiosity and its signs were ferociously attacked on December 22. Besides the pain entailed by the killing itself, what it represents is outrageous: the counterinsurgency strategy against indigenous communities and the Church committed to them.

After Acteal and the Federal Government's new strategy, the CONAI defined in 1998 several criteria and lines of work to bring about a new stage and strategy in the Peace process. The object was to halt polarization, recover conditions favorable to a negotiated solution and reactivate links between the Chiapas conflict and national political problems. The possibility of overcoming the difficult impasse forged months before required opening political spaces and wills within the forces and tendencies that disputed the leadership and direction of democratic transition and reforming the Mexican state.

With a more confrontational attitude, the government managed to disconnect Chiapas from the national situation, reducing the conflict to affirming that it had surged as an undue imposture. To relativize the Chiapas conflict, the Federal Government continued to "consolidate its military advantages politically", changing the stage's objectives so they no longer turned upon recovering conditions for a substantive negotiation with the EZLN. It insisted on its diagnosis that "the conflict is a sum of local problems derived from poverty", attempting a unilateral solution that didn't involve substantive negotiation but rather implementing various governmental measures and programs.

As is further known, the tendency toward polarization continued to produce new types of local confrontations. This allowed the Government of Chiapas, in the name of "recovering the rule of law", to carry out various juridical-military operations, violently attacking the autonomous municipal councils promoted and governed by civil Zapatista bases. Faced with these attacks, the EZLN fell back upon strategic silence, to which the Government responded by diversifying and shifting its confrontation toward the CONAI, in particular, the COCOPA, Civil Society and international solidarity active in Chiapas.

With this strategy, far from recovering conditions to establish a regulated process of dialogue and negotiation, the government worsened the crisis in the general model proposed by the San Andrés Table. It desired to move to simplified military capitulation, since the government reduced its acknowledgment of the EZLN to its

identity and military capacity, setting aside its political causes, reasons, convocation and connections. During 1998, the situation became further removed from conditions for negotiation, and the basis for mediation work was further weakened.

4. Since Acteal, another stage in the process has been opened. Acteal made national history, going well beyond Chiapas. There is evidence that the paramilitary groups were backed and protected by PRI authorities and officials. But the government began an intense campaign to deny responsibility and capitalize upon national and world indignation caused by the killing. It has done so by playing the role it has wanted to play: the Government and Army as conciliators and no Party to the conflict.

Of course, measures were taken to detain those directly responsible, since the conflict involved “problems between families and communities.” Military presence was increased everywhere, because “only the Army can guaranty order, stability and legality.” The Government levelled the accusation that “all this is because of the EZLN refused to enter into dialogue.”

Without forgetting secondary contradictions, the CONAI's reflections lead it to reaffirm that the central problem for the worsening process was the reductionist and counterinsurgency strategy of the Federal Government. This strategy, insufficient and wrong, is based on military logic and tension, subordinating the logic of negotiation to the military correlation. Furthermore, it attempts to empty dialogue and negotiation with the indigenous movement (the real actor) of content and representativeness, dividing the movement and breaking off all relationships that would oblige the state to negotiate solutions to the causes of the conflict. The strategy attempts to dialogue with the defeated, a quick, temporary and shallow harvest of the diagnosis of political and military victory some officials are already making.

This strategy administrates polarization and violence instead of avoiding them. The disconnection and confrontation between civilians, organizations and communities has been the route to shift the conflict, agenda and interlocutors toward conflict with indigenous groups. The Government has rejected the five minimum conditions set forth by the Zapatistas on September 2, 1996, to renew dialogue, and has trying to foist its posture on public opinion the EZLN should cede. The Government does not desire to approve the constitutional reform based on San Andrés for fear that the Juarist state could be harmed, but it insists that the Zapatistas are those who should come to their senses, lacking representativeness, size and weight. With this conviction, the Government continues along the military path in Chiapas: a war neither declared nor resolved, active but denied.

In this framework of tension and the impossibility of overcoming the impasse in negotiations, on January 3, 1998, the new Interior Secretary took office with the instruction to pursue a “new strategy for Chiapas.” The tense relationship with the CONAI was one of the elements to reevaluate or resolve. In the first few weeks, there were intense dealings with the CONAI so it could contribute its profoundest vision on the process, the errors in the government's strategy, and proposals to reorient the process toward solving the causes of the conflict.

On January 22, the CONAI emitted a joint communiqué with the COCOPA, which established 10 minimum conditions for dialogue and negotiation. This document contrasted sharply with the government's posture, which demanded immediate renewal of the dialogue and discussion of political-military conditions as a posterior phase contingent upon renewed talks. This governmental posture is different from that which motivated the ELZN's withdrawal from the San Andrés Table in demand of fulfillment of the distinct mechanisms the Parties had agreed upon: that is, the dialogue has always required certain previous conditions, and faced with the present impasse the immediate task must first provide conditions for later renewal of dialogue. Notwithstanding the differences between the CONAI-COCOPA stance and the government, the relationship maintained a respectful tone which, however, was soon gone by the wayside.

The relationship strained badly because since Acteal, a multiple phenomenon had been occurring: apart from civil groups, diverse governments and multilateral organizations began to express bewilderment as to the insufficiency of official information to explain a deterioration so delicate as to permit the Acteal massacre. Embassies and governments began to seek contact with the CONAI for direct information on other elements helpful to understand what was happening. In any event, there was worry that the violence continued to increase, since no one wants Mexico to burst out in flame. The contacts with the CONAI didn't please the Government.

Furthermore, in February an International Human Rights Observation Mission arrived to Mexico with members representing civil, ecclesiastical and academic organizations from more than 10 countries. This initiative, which surged forth from Barcelona and Paris, took shape after consultations with the CONAI, concerned –as were others- for guaranteeing and expanding the field of international observers in matters of human rights and Peace. The mission's proposal was presented by the CONAI to Mexican authorities in Foreign Relations, who for the first time authorized a special visa. The mission was autonomous, and the CONAI was not in charge of organizing the agenda or logistics.

Nevertheless, on February 17, the Interior Secretariat issued an official communiqué in which its head accused Miguel Álvarez of promoting an international interventionist movement, stating that he had “moved away from the task of mediation given him by law.” Since this situation, there was a change in the government's attitude toward the CONAI. Also, there was a notable xenophobic campaign of aggression against foreigners that increased over the following weeks.

It must be remembered that a strategy based on the logic of state is at work in Chiapas, of which one of the fundamental features since the first days of January 1994 has been to close off all possibility of internationalizing the conflict. This including impeding application of juridical or institutional frames of reference distinct from the Mexican. The “new strategy” that the Government would attempt to implement beginning in January 1998 turned out to be not new at all, but rather just a new attitude, phase or tactic of the former strategy.

Things being as they were, the Government distanced itself from what had been built up, but accused the CONAI of moving away from its impartiality. The Federal Government began to show signs of detachment and unconcern over dialogue with the EZLN, to the point where it unilaterally presented a Constitutional Reform bill to the Senate of the Republic, rejecting any possibility of consensus and setting aside the rules and procedures agreed upon to search for negotiated solutions.

For these reasons, the implications and risks for the Peace process challenged the moral service and truth of the CONAI to made known its assessment of this attitude. So, on March 17 the CONAI published its document “In Defense of Indigenous Peoples, in Defense of the Negotiation for Peace, In Defense of the Agreements”. Publication of this critical posture toward the Government, and the CONAI's accurate reflections, opened another phase of the government's anger. The Government began to accuse the CONAI openly of having severed itself from its mediation posture, even stating that it had never possessed such a posture, having been self-named and always partial.

All attempts and political tasks in this stage, of course, failed, since it was impossible to construct a solid political solution while undermining possibilities for progress on such a solution. Neither has it been possible to reestablish the COSEVER, while the Government of Chiapas plays its gambit of unilateral, superficial and self-seeking fulfillment of the local commitments and agreements it has contracted.

The impasse hasn't been overcome and, although conditions don't exist to renew the dialogue, the Federal Government has intensified its calls for “direct dialogue”. In this context, civil society diversified its calls and proposals during 1998, changing its worry into initiative. The Government utilized the Zapatista silence, and now its consultation, to inculcate it for the lack of will to negotiate. This confused many political and social sectors, which directed their pressure against the Zapatistas instead of pressuring the Government to rectify its non-compliance and generate favorable military conditions.

The tension and dispute are total. The problem is complex. The context and postures seem murky. Only evaluating the strategic moment will provide clarity. Temporary, isolated elements don't suffice to explain the complexity and bring about a qualitative change in stage.

5. In its internal analysis, around March 1998 the CONAI located its governmental strategy within five possible scenarios, all active and not necessarily mutually exclusive.
 - a) Paramilitary provocation of a violent incident that directly involved the Zapatista armed corps, to provoke an armed exit aimed at decapitating the EZLN.
 - b) Governmental declaration that negotiations had been exhausted; proposal of its own legal frame of reference for unilateral constitutional reform; attending local causes of the conflict through social programs;

and an offer of amnesty. This would be a way of again declaring the Zapatistas to be criminals and of turning the juridical-military machinery toward apprehending them (a legal variant of the military solution).

- c) Maintaining the impasse. The government, speaking of direct dialogue and combatting poverty but acting based on its military strategy, would continue to reduce the theme of Chiapas to an imposture that grew unduly, and continue its total, short term relativization in lieu of lasting solutions. It would administer the violence, gradating but not avoiding it. The EZLN would manage to consolidate its bases and municipalities, strengthening its resistance and expanding its connections to other indigenous and civil forces.
- d) Diversification of the violence, beyond impasse and the crisis in negotiation. It is possible that a generalized and inorganic phase of violence break out in two ways: sharpening local secondary contradictions cultivated by the government's military and paramilitary strategy and/or acceleration of armed confrontation provoked by groups disputing national power and the political transition, interested in setting violent conditions from here to 2000. With this scheme, similar to the lamentable situation in Colombia, we would lose possibilities of dialogue for a political solution for a long time to come. This scenario is strictly national, and includes action by the other 18(?) armed movements in the country.
- e) Avoiding the tendency toward violence and deterioration through generating a great national civil movement with international support, capable of unfurling a new initiative and strategy for Peace with justice and democracy.

In this context, events continued to worsen nationally to the point of descending to the executions at El Charco, in Guerrero. The public attacks by the Government on Don Samuel and his religiosity were headed by President Zedillo himself, ever more aggressively. This situation reflects differences regarding the Church in the conflict and Peace process, as well as the dispute over civil society's role, of which the CONAI was a collective expression.

Thus, tensions elevated, leading to the June 7, 1998, declaration of general crisis and the disappearance of the CONAI. A fundamental element of our decision was the strictly ecclesiastical and episcopal dimension of Don Samuel, whose responsibilities and actions cannot be reduced to, but rather sustained his mediation work. With this decision, Don Samuel didn't stop being a Bishop, nor did he leave off being an indispensable builder in the Peace process.

We observed that the conditions for mediation had been exhausted, a result of the conditions for negotiation having been broken. Conditions for the Peace process had been halted, and mediation was no longer a factor sufficient to resolve these distinct crises. We could no longer bear witness because neither conditions nor actions existed for negotiation and dialogue. Nor could we be guarantor because, in spite of our efforts, there were violations, ruptures, non-compliance. Nor could we be guide because the confrontation was taking place on other grounds and logics.

The visible point of tension between the state and the CONAI was that the former held out a model of negotiation and Peace that it no longer wished to follow. Of course, at bottom, the hard-line sectors in the state considered the CONAI's president to be the main obstacle. Bishop Ruiz incarnated strong ecclesiastical action committed to indigenous causes. Wrongly, the Government tried to treat his as a political actor, guide and representative of the conflict. The direct attacks against the Diocese and its Bishops, accusing them of being part of the problem and not the solution, attempted to strike at the heart of Don Samuel's ecclesiastical support and affect the moral basis for his mediating capability in the CONAI.

The tensions surrounding the mediators were always understood in the framework of the deeper dispute over the conditions and direction of negotiation and the Peace process. The problem wasn't the mediation, but the will and convergence of strategies on the orientation, profundity and seriousness in building Peace politically.

After Don Samuel and the CONAI felt that the basis for their mediation had terminated, an insidious provocation and execution took place on June 10 in the rebel municipality of El Bosque. President Zedillo continued his attacks on Don Samuel and the Diocese of San Cristóbal on July 1. A number of voices raised in demand of international mediation, proposing the UN itself. High officials intensify their search for trustworthy channels to the EZLN, trying to get the rebels to commit to direct dialogue.

Meanwhile, the COCOPA attempted to work out a military stand-down plan. The EZLN broke out of its silence with a long message that reiterated the loss of minimum credibility to reestablish negotiations. On July 20, it launched

its Vth Declaration from the Lacandon Jungle, in which the Zapatista Command establishes its strategic orientation, proposing a national consultation regarding the COCOPA constitutional reform initiative. The Government responded by again insisting on direct dialogue, rejecting that "laws be made in the jungle", and making it clear that it has decided to leave all to inertia.

IV.- 1998: General Crisis and Strategic Dispute

1.- What has been at stake and in dispute in the recent stage is:

- a) How to characterize the conflict itself; while there it is increasingly clear nationally and internationally that Chiapas reflects a new type of conflict with the state, the Government has limited it to an infeasible resurgence of the old guerrilla conflicts that states believe they have a right to crush.
- b) The diagnosis used to explain the rebellion and conflict in Chiapas, as well as the conception of peace and the type of solution (derived from the dispute over diagnoses, since the way in which the problem is considered will determine how the solution is considered).
- c) The status of the conflict. The EZLN is acting under the logic of Internal Armed Conflict, which should give rise to a negotiating process between the parties; the Government is reducing the conflict to a set of local problems and poverty, which require governmental solution outside negotiations.
- d) The conditions and limits of political negotiation, as well as its role and weight in subordinating the military element. In spite of the fact that San Miguel and San Andrés were agreed upon since 1995, the agenda, type and limits of the accords, as well as linkage between this negotiation and other agendas and spaces in national political life, entered in open dispute due to the government's change of posture which shifted the logic and weight to military and paramilitary actors.
- e) The dialogue and negotiation model, its procedures and rules of the game. In spite of San Andrés, the Government is now moving within a military logic to promote a different model oriented toward solutions for actors and not causes. The EZLN is reduced to from a representative indigenous counterpart with whom it is necessary to negotiate a substantive agenda to again become, according to the hard-line reading, a military actor who must be defeated and disarmed.
- f) The trustworthiness of the negotiation process, put in crisis by the strategy of non-compliance with the accords, particularly because of the difficulties and obstacles to constitutional reform on Indigenous Rights and Culture springing from the San Andrés Agreements.
- g) The process of incorporating other actors in solving the conflict; while one party understands that greater co-responsibility produces better conditions for real solutions, while the other party is attempting a rapid solution with fewer actors.
- h) The degree and character of international collaboration. While one Party considers such collaboration indispensable to foster the profound internal changes required by Peace, the other considers it inadmissible, interventionist and unnecessary.

2.- Suspension of the dialogue, the growing impasse, and increasingly complex tensions and disputes affected trust in the mediators. Since September, 1996, the peace and negotiation processes in Chiapas found themselves in a deep and complicated crisis, which can be characterized by the following aspects:

- Crisis in the dialogue and negotiation model, which the parties had agreed would be oriented toward solving the causes of the conflict and advancing political over military logic.
- Crisis in confidence toward political paths due to the inability to comply with the procedures and agreements covenanted at the San Andrés Table.
- Crisis in civil and political actors' lack of initiative to advance demilitarization and de-polarization, a failure which has resulted in continued deterioration of the Chiapas context.

- Crisis of minimum conditions necessary to reactivate the dialogue between the Federal Government and the EZLN.
- Crisis in the Parties' strategies, which have become snarled in their dispute and hastened the disintegration and weakness of the peace negotiation dynamic.

If peace were to be achieved solely via negotiation between the warring parties, the crisis in the dialogue and the social and political deterioration in Chiapas confirmed that the problem of peace was already far more complicated than dialogue and negotiation between the government and the Zapatistas. Sundering the San Andrés Table from the whole of the pacification process, as well as increasing polarization of other conflicts related to the causes of the main conflict, explain the general worsening in political, economic, social and cultural ambits that Chiapas has experienced since 1996.

All this has confirmed that the question for peace is of far-reaching national character, since it is clear that political conditions –today alarmingly unfavorable—can only be advanced by democratizing change that promotes peace and occurs at the national level for all regions and conflicts of the country, particularly where there is already some form of rebellion or armed struggle.

These disputes –over characterization, diagnosis, defining status, establishing conditions and limits for political negotiation, its role and weight in subordinating military actors, and finally the dispute over the dialogue and negotiation model, its normativity and trustworthiness—were also elements that influenced the Parties' attitudes on participation of other local actors, civil society and the international community.

All these factors, essential and significant in defining the direction of negotiation and peace, were not disputed by the Parties within the confines of the negotiation itself, but in other social, political, diplomatic and public opinion terrains.

The main point, therefore, does not center on mediation. Explaining the crisis and deterioration cannot be attributed to the mediators, but the other way around: the crisis in the peace process and negotiation, caused by specific strategies, also affected the mediators' work. The CONAI responded to this situation in June, 1998, with appropriate action, which nevertheless neither guaranteed stopping the military tendency nor opening a political stage. The objective is to generate spaces, sensitivity and the will that can do so. The situation is pressing, since confrontations, refugees, wounded, widows, and those affected by fear are growing in number. As in other conflicts, all worsens when the effects are so painful that attending to them becomes the priority instead of achieving solidity in the process concerning the deeper causes of the conflict. This is a fundamental double challenge that the process must confront.

- 3.- As we pointed out some lines above, the complications concern not only negotiation between the Parties. Unfortunately, this negotiation has lost its ability to influence and control the peace process as a whole, which instead of progressing has regressed into increasing violence, paramilitarization, and sharpening of other conflicts that cohabit in Chiapas and the entire country.

Behind its discourse, the government has applied a hard, calculating logic of state. The state's current strategy is still founded on military hegemony, and in this framework speaks of a limited will to dialogue. On top of attempts to reduce the representativeness and importance of the Chiapas conflict, the governmental strategy has stepped up action to divide and weaken other actors and proposals. Of course, a logic of state of this nature cannot promote a political dynamic to foment peace and compliance with the San Andrés agreements.

There are unmistakable signs that the Government has attempted to reduce and substitute dialogue with the EZLN via relations with other actors in Chiapas. The goal is to isolate the EZLN politically and take away its social base, not only through diversifying the dialogue but also in seeking other models and spaces for negotiation that no longer oblige the state to act as a party to the conflict or commit it to solving the causes. The government is attempting to dispute junctures where the state's force is greater than that of disjointed actors and demands. Thus, the state is attempting to create its own space and model to administer the conflict, without taking into account the San Andrés model's implications and commitments.

A feature of the state's strategy, implemented via the state government of Chiapas, has been to attack the autonomous municipalities, worsening the problem of armed conflict and further distancing favorable conditions for dialogue. Thus, the state has nourished its strategy of exhaustion, de-synchronization and division, constructing a solution desirable for the state based on military tension and polarization of indigenous communities.

Another key aspect in explaining the present features of the crisis in the peace process lies in the continuing hard-line, dual strategy that the state and security forces have applied starting with the appearance of other armed movements in the country. The government is continuing with its scheme of making the EZLN look like a respected and controlled guerrilla while openly applying counterinsurgency and anti-terrorist measures to other armed groups. This in no way favors conditions and political paths necessary for a national, pacific solution to the causes of the conflict. This tension entered into a vicious cycle: the more militarization, the greater the militarization of the other party, which entailed a consequent lesser emphasis on political means.

The foregoing aggravates the ebb that the national civil dynamic is undergoing regarding the peace process due to the opening or reopening of other scenarios and agendas for democratic transition, which now concentrate a good part of the political and social resources that formerly impelled the peace process. The government has also counted on this. Trust in critical agencies has been undermined: the CONAI because of its religious and civil links; the COCOPA because of it comprises political parties; the COSEVER (Follow-Up and Verification Commission) because of its parity.

Promoting greater international collaboration and facilitation increasingly seems to be an important necessity and hope. But the government has also intensified its information campaign to bolster its public image, attempting to avoid any intervention on the part of international organizations and agencies: the Chiapas problem has already been resolved; Chiapas is an internal, local problem; all interventionism is unacceptable.

At the diplomatic level, the Government has intensified propaganda in favor of its diagnosis, its view of the conflict status, its conception of peace. Many on the outside agree and know that not all dialogue is valid, nor all negotiation desirable. Not all peace is viable, nor can all peace attend to the causes of the conflict.

Thus, if peace is not only the result of negotiation between the Parties, and if the actors co-responsible for peace are not only the actors of war and negotiation, it is necessary to reflect on the advisability of a new type of civil mediation in which the Parties concede power to arbitrate and formulate strategic proposals to guarantee and orient negotiation toward serving the process of peace with justice and dignity. The mediation would be backed by recognized interaction with actors, tasks and problems of the peace process and enjoy international recognition and facilitation.

- 4.- The link between Chiapas and national actors has been shifted. In January, 1994, Chiapas became the epicenter of a national earthquake. All Mexico was in play with what was happening in Chiapas. But since then, this link has been displaced. Before, Mexico needed a solution in Chiapas; now, Chiapas requires certain national conditions and solutions. In truth, this interaction has been very complicated, since throughout the various stages there have been various combinations of axis and main factor.

Certainly, today Chiapas not only reflects national causes, but peace depends on how political conditions are resolved in the entire country, given that peace is fundamentally a question of the political path (since the crisis, weakness or inability of natural political actors and conditions explains the fact that there are groups, classes, sectors or causes that need to recur to arms). Thus, if we consider that there are other armed movements in the country, nine of which have now gone public; if we recall that there are other zones in the country where the causes and conditions exist for appearance of rebellions and new conflicts; if political factors always unleash armed movements, even though there is underlying misery: the main challenge is then how to link the national transition, the dispute over political transition and the very democratic reform of the state, to Chiapas and peace.

The CONAI is convinced that there can be no conditions for peace as long as conditions for full justice and democracy don't exist; that full responses for peace, in the sense of solving the causes of the conflict, are intimately linked to a profound reform of the state. That is, the responses to the causes do not lie in old institutions; the responses to the causes can only lie in designing new priorities and institutions that accompany reform of the state. Somehow, the order of the factors, in effect, shifted; today, peace must be

understood as one of the central items on the agenda of governmental reform and the transition towards democracy, such that the reform opens conditions for profound answers, and not the reverse.

The government, of course, is attempting to solve the problem rapidly, in accordance with demands set forth by many civil forces of good will. But this implies an answer for actors, but not for causes. That is to say, we are faced with a new type of conflict whose just causes lead us to believe that viable construction of Peace requires a long political process of solutions that go hand in hand with the national transition. Those that, in despair, desire a rapid though superficial solution are postponing responses to the causes. This resolves nothing; therefore, what we must think of how to make Mexican society stop thinking of peace as only a Chiapas problem. As long as the demands of Indian peoples are not assumed as our own, recognizing indigenous people's place as part of civil society, as long as peace isn't recognized as a national problem in which democracy and justice are at stake even in places where rebellions haven't occurred, it will be difficult to understand and foster a diagnosis, characterization, type of negotiation and type of peace process that we truly need.

Therefore, the question is if society will only reflect the polarization between the parties, or if the maturation of society and its proposals will become the factor that defines peace. That is, Peace can't be the sole responsibility of the warring parties, nor can it be the mere product of what the warring parties agree upon: Peace can only be built where society becomes the main referent that establishes coordinates for the spaces of dispute between the parties. Therefore, the maturity of civil linkages, society's proposals, are the indispensable factor to deepen the peace process as political solution of conflicts converted into opportunities for fair change.

The indicator is: the higher the degree of social maturation, the higher the degree of maturation in the peace process. Subject and project. What we are seeing here is that Mexican society as such has not taken into its hands the task and cause of peace, and only some civil organizations are working in solidarity with the conflict. The conviction is that, in general, this stage is progressing badly, that the San Andrés crisis worsened the crisis for the entire peace process, and that the key lies in opening a new stage toward political means, in which society is to be the great actor that bursts on the scene, stabilizing and giving direction, mystique and sustenance to the political path for constructing profound peace.

5.- To sum things up, a general evaluation of the peace process allows us to affirm that:

- Substantive advance in the peace process came to a halt when, given the refusal to fulfill the commitments signed, and to negotiate the remaining topics seriously, a credibility crisis commenced regarding the San Andrés model.
- Substantive advance in the peace process marked by subordination of the military to politics did not enter into a definitive stage with the signing of the first agreements; rather, a new military stage began in the government's strategy, now marked by taking the confrontation, destruction and polarization to the Zapatista support bases and indigenous communities.
- Substantive advance in the peace process, insofar as it spread a general tendency toward reconciliation and dialogue to all actors and conflicts related to the main conflict and its actors, has not been achieved, since the strategy followed since 1996 of dividing progress at the Table from the rest of the peace process has been successful. Thus, negotiation between the Government and the EZLN wasn't enough to promote all implications and elements of the peace process, nor even to ease tensions generally. Related but distinct, the peace and negotiation crises were handled in different ways.
- Given the general deterioration and increasing paramilitarization, the CONAI could not maintain the strategic confrontation between the Parties within the rules of the game and spaces for dialogue. The tension and dispute spilled over into other terrains and spaces, further complicating the possibility of getting these processes back on track.
- Public opinion and communications media became polarized spaces in dispute, and didn't manage to become a point of reference in building peace. The polarization covered all national sectors and ambits.
- The parties haven't been able to define a conception or arrive at a consensus on the diagnostic, the status, characterization or nature of the conflict. Therefore, there is no national consensus regarding the

type of negotiation and peace process to be promoted. All the foundations that allowed for a political solution are again in question.

- Linking Chiapas and the San Andrés agenda with other national actors and agendas neither achieved great progress. The Federal Government fortified its strategy to isolate, make relative and localize the conflict, risks and challenges in Chiapas.
- Civil participation, understood as diversification of actors, spaces and tasks of collaboration and facilitation of the process of negotiation and change necessary to attend to the causes of the conflict, far from consolidating itself, has also been reduced. Again, the dominant strategy of one of the Parties, taking advantage of its military superiority, greater resources and means of expression, has brought about this reduction.

V. Challenges and Perspectives

1. Given the risks of the present impasse and inertia, a new strategy is indispensable to promote a pacification and negotiation process and, in particular, open up a **new stage of military detente with tendencies favorable toward dialogue.**

a) The need for a distinct stage in which we can recreate tendencies favorable to peace on the basis of effective detente measures may be grounded on three criteria: that both Parties (read: particularly the Government) redirect their strategies toward negotiation; that they ratify the clarity and sense of the dialogue and negotiation aimed at the causes of the conflict; and that they contribute to recovering credibility and confidence in the political detente process and fulfillment of the pacts.

This new stage could and should be opened up in a convergent manner, generating simultaneous dynamics on the part of civil society and the parties to halt deterioration and recrudescing violence. Pressure must also be applied to fulfill the pacts and demilitarize.

b) The foregoing point is intimately linked to one of the most important challenges and tasks in the strategic stage we must open: we are speaking of subordinating military logic to the advance and confidence in the political path. We must convince the Mexican state that it doesn't lose and isn't weakened in opening spaces for Indian peoples and reaching political solutions for all conflicts and actors. We must convince it that an integral strategy of strengthening all actors, instead of disjoining and weakening them, is in its best interests; that it is possible to reduce military action to strengthen governability, as well as social and political actors; that in a Peace process, the vacuum isn't necessarily filled militarily; and that without the necessary demilitarization, all efforts run the risk of failing.

c) It is necessary to halt deterioration, violence and polarization. At bottom, the challenge is to connect and subordinate, throughout society, the logic of violence to the political process. It is not only a problem of will, but also of creating dynamics and organizations that help recover the social fabric and participation of all communities and regions, all types of organizations and sectors. Together with strengthening the tasks of reconciliation, we must achieve spaces in the most conflictive zones to attract intense participation in universities, research centers and NGO's. Although the diagnosis isn't sufficient, it is nonetheless urgent to set out from there to foster a culture of reconciliation and regional and national promotion of Peace.

d) It is fundamental to continue insisting upon strengthening and diversifying civil society's role throughout the process, in all its levels, stages and aspects. This also includes strengthening local actors in diverse conflicts that have to do with the rebellion. Strengthening the main negotiation, we must look at a total, interlinked system of dialogues and circuits for the different problems and solutions. For this, we will also have to redimension verification work, the specific tasks of the COSEVER, so it can contribute to the feasibility of and social participation in assuring compliance with the accords.

e) Peace requires promoting institutionality, building spaces, tasks, a mystique and ethic for all to get involved and take Peace onto themselves. At certain levels, this means a conceptual and programmatic discussion.

The challenge of Peace involves politics and civil participation, in Mexico's case, toward democratic progress. This line must be pursued.

- f) It is also important to evaluate the fact that, despite the international preoccupation over Peace, there isn't at present a favorable world correlation to solve the deep causes of the conflicts, above all with regard to economic policy and the causes of poverty. We must sensitive world powers, but crude reality and maturity dictate that we orient our solutions to the very long term while guarantying medium term processes. Regarding the measures that should inaugurate the process, we must nail down negotiation and the search for governability and co-existence. Democracy, culture, human rights, indigenous rights, sovereignty, sustainable development, justice ... in this bouquet of field lies the chance for Peace from the micro to the macro. A Peace process must be conceived in stages, in which convergence and support are achieved for specific tasks in each moment. In Mexico, this hasn't been achieved because the diagnoses, conceptions of peace, conceptions of its stages or particular needs in each moment have been diverse. If these grand definitions are strategically harmonized, this would contribute to accelerating the peace process.
- g) Furthermore, the new strategy and stage require some extraordinary measures. For example, achieving somehow that international opinion and will support a representative collective of personages from different countries to be active, proposing observers of the Mexican process. A national diagnosis of violence is desirable, as well as defining and following indicators of conflict and militarization in the country at large, in indigenous zones, and in Chiapas, Guerrero and Oaxaca in particular. These measures imply extraordinary initiatives to recover spaces for convergence with similar organizations in other countries, above all, Latin America. Urgent measures are needed to combat the explosive violence that will occur in various zones if political transitions don't become viable options to solve tensions and demands.
- h) It is necessary to harmonize national forces, with the support of the new balance of forces and role for Congress, with a decisive COCOPA, re-animated by its autonomy within the Federal Government to foster three immediate conditions: halting paramilitarization, getting reconciliation on track and guarantying promulgation of constitutional reform on indigenous rights and culture that fully respects the San Andrés Agreements. Without these tasks, it will be difficult to open a new strategic stage.

2. The new civil strategy for Peace requires launching initiatives to meet the following challenges:

- a) Linking Peace to democratic transition and Reform of the Mexican State.
- b) Negotiated, political solutions and dialogue on the causes (national, local and indigenous) that reflect rebellion, starting with recognition of the rights of indigenous peoples.
- c) Guiding and subordinating military actors' logic and needs to politics.
- d) Putting the conflict and main actors in the center, integrally linking conflicts, agendas and actors implicated in the solution.
- e) Halting paramilitarization and polarization via foster a general, inclusive process of dialogue and negotiation that incorporates actors necessary for governability and true change.
- f) Strengthening the legal framework, model and institutions for Peace.
- g) General compliance with agreements and proceedings to increase confidence in negotiation and the political way.

For the time being, neither objective nor subjective conditions exist for dialogue and negotiation. It is urgent that we demand the Government to create favorable conditions for negotiation to bring forth real results. The central point isn't the EZLN's military capabilities or in disarming the rebels, but in the disproportionately aggressive action of the Mexican Army against communities, organizations and indigenous autonomy. Indian peoples are not enemies of the Mexican state. De-paramilitarizing the zone is urgent to create conditions conducive to dialogue. Disarming the Zapatistas will be a posterior fruit of negotiation.

International collaboration, facilitation and solidarity are desirable, including governmental agencies, not to substitute the Parties, their contents, mechanisms and accords, but rather to aid in politically reorienting and motivating the process of Peace with justice and democracy. This doesn't mean that national means have been exhausted, but that these need explicit international backing for the changes required by democracy, human rights and justice.

3. What conditions exist for mediation in such a complicated process? What actor may be the judge of those conditions? What should be achieved first, conditions for negotiation or new mediators, if neither exists but both are required mutually? The CONAI pointed out that there are no conditions in the short term for mediation, not for itself or any other actor. Conditions for mediation don't necessarily imply great trust, but a chance for great service. This is only useful when the Parties have decided to approach the mediators. Behind the public whipping the CONAI took in being accused of relinquishing its impartiality, what's certain is that the CONAI defended the model and viable, agreed and signed conditions for negotiation.

a) The question at bottom is if there are conditions for negotiation that give mediation meaning. Now, there aren't conditions that would sustain a new mediation effort. Perhaps civil movements have to arise to generate references and postures that help move the Parties.

There are so many elements behind the scenes that it would seem insufficient to suggest that, given the CONAI's dissolution, the immediate task is to name other mediators. This is simplistic because the main crisis isn't mediation; rather, the crisis in mediation reflects the main crisis of the Peace and negotiation process as a whole. But this general crisis wasn't caused by the specific crisis in mediation, nor by probable errors on the CONAI's part. To think that there are already conditions for new mediation, or that direct dialogue is possible, is to fall into the government's interpretation, which limits the status, diagnostic and explanations. The crisis is deeper, and that's where initiatives must be aimed, not just at new mediation.

It is convenient to define the type and size of social movement that would give substance to new mediation. It would require a weight greater than that of the Parties' trust. Given the collective, complex nature of the problem, only a great social movement can reopen conditions for negotiation, as well as mediation. A new mediation, acceptable to the first and initially national in character, may come forth only from society.

b) Now, could this new mediation be international? When the Mexican government has participated in other countries, its participation is not understood as intervention, but as solidarity. In contrast, the Mexican government closes itself when other organizations or governments wish to collaborate in Chiapas. In truth, the discourse of a sovereignty in which only external economic relations matter is fast playing itself out. The government's international patrimony is tumbling down, the same as its public and political patrimony.

The problem is that the government has capitalized upon its international action and has led to several deviations, not only inside, but also outside. One such deviation is to convert support of some Latin American vanguards into a strategic relation with the Mexican government which prevents them from being reciprocally supportive and congruent with the needs of the Mexican people in its struggle for democracy and Peace. This is a phenomenon of distortion. It is necessary to recreate Mexico's place in the world and Latin America, not by governmental action, but through the action of society itself. However, we should not forget that what is important is mediation adequate to resolve the type of negotiation and Peace process. An international actor doesn't necessarily guarantee this.

Thus, the Parties' decision will depend more on the stage and process. That is to say, conditions must mature before the parties accept an international role, but first, the basis that sustains mediation must mature. Mediation is missing; there are no conditions for direct dialogue. No experience in the world has demonstrated that the whole negotiating process may be resolved without mediation. But if there is no willingness and consensus between the parties on national mediation, they may open up increasingly to the possibility of international mediation.

c) What type of international mediation? There are several options. It could be civil, religious or academic, not necessarily governmental or the UN. It is not the same for governmental mechanisms to intervene as mediators; ultimately, by logic of state, they will be closer to governmental postures. Could it be that the best thing for our Peace process is for governments that in some way back one of the Parties in conflict to intervene? Or could it be that the best thing is for governments to collaborate only in the role of political and financial facilitators, such that mediation falls more on other actors more capable of winning trust in this new

type of conflict? Thus, on second glance, an international civil mediation would seem more appropriate, which although it may have UN backing, wouldn't think about old solutions to the old types of conflicts. Here, we are faced with themes that haven't matured.

4. In any case, we must open reflection on this new stage and mediation for Peace with society's and international solidarity's responsibilities. It is in no one's best interests to think that, given globalization and reform of the state, it's better for the armed option to remain open. It is better for all to think about maturing democracy to confront conditions of dispute, adjustment of economic, political and social models via governability that encourages citizen participation.

The conflict and crisis in the Peace process derive from the crisis of the Mexican state, which is best to confront as a whole. It is not possible to confront problems by isolating them, politics on its own, the economy on its own, etc. This may be one of the main errors of the current presidency and government: believing that problems of the state can be resolved, as with problems of government, by isolating them. The problem is deep and requires an integral vision and proposal. The principal challenge is new project of nation and state. Peace and indigenous matters should be a central but not only element of what must be defined ahead. Also, political and civil forces will be closed to paths of solution as long as they struggle partially, by sectors.

Considering all the disputes, and observing that immediate renewal of dialogue is not viable, it is urgent to foster a new national movement, the more connected, the better. This movement must be able to conceive and propose a strategic alternative to stop the war, link Peace to democracy, and develop actions that allow the Parties to change the positions. The main challenge is to recreate general conditions for negotiation via a Peace process oriented toward truly solving the causes of the conflict.

5. Finally, remembering that armed conflicts also refer to worldwide problems and incapacity, the conflicts and processes of Peace aren't cases that need special attention, but rather trees that reveal a sick forest in need of transformation. Renewing our spirits to generate a new type of world civil movement for Peace will always be welcome. This movement must take upon itself problems and influence changes toward the root causes. Vision, ethics, mystique and values are needed.

Without conditions for justice and democracy, where domination instead prevails, the painful possibility remains open for the excluded to offer their lives to open new hope. Better, let's build hope.

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