

## CHANGES IN THE COMPOSITION OF THE U.S. SALVADORAN AID PROGRAM

The composition of the U.S. aid program in El Salvador changed markedly during the 1980s. In 1980, development aid accounted for most of the U.S. assistance provided to the country, since military aid was severely restricted on account of concern about the human rights situation. In 1980 and 1981, however, the Carter and Reagan Administrations made major policy decisions which fundamentally changed the composition of the U.S. aid program in El Salvador. During this transition period, 1980-81, as table 5 shows, development aid declined as a proportion of the U.S. aid package from 67 to 23 percent of the total, while military aid increased from 9 to 23 percent and ESF and food aid--programs which serve both developmental and security objectives<sup>64</sup>--increased from a combined 24 to a combined 64 percent of the total.

Since fiscal 1982, the basic dimensions of the U.S. aid program in El Salvador have been very similar to those evidenced today. In both 1982 and 1989, for example, development aid accounted for about 16 percent of the total U.S. aid package. The proportion devoted to military aid has declined somewhat, from 27 to 22 percent of total aid, and the combined total for ESF and food aid went from 57 to 62 percent of total U.S. aid.

El Salvador went from being the sixteenth largest recipient of overall U.S. aid in fiscal 1980 to the fifth largest in 1982 and the sixth largest in 1989. In terms of development aid, as table 6 shows, El Salvador went in rank from the sixth largest country program in 1980 and seventh largest in 1982 to become the largest U.S. development aid program in 1989. For ESF aid, El Salvador went from fourteenth in 1980 to sixth in 1982, and to fifth in 1989. For food aid, it went from thirty-second in 1980 to sixth in 1982, and to seventh in 1989. For military aid, El Salvador went from twentieth in 1980 to ninth in 1982, and to seventh in 1989.

### THE TERMS FOR U.S. ASSISTANCE

The terms for the U.S. aid provided to El Salvador also changed during the 1980s. When the decade began, as Figure 2 shows, grant aid was only a

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<sup>64</sup> ESF aid is programmed to finance both development projects and balance of payments support programs which help the Salvadoran private sector obtain access to the foreign exchange resources they need to remain in operation. The P.L. 480 Title I program is basically a balance of payments support program, financing imports of food products for distribution at market prices through regular commercial channels. The smaller P.L. 480 Title II program, on the other hand, is basically a humanitarian relief operation, providing food to needy individuals through private voluntary organizations and other non-marketplace mechanisms.

## OTHER SALVADORANS RELOCATED OUTSIDE EL SALVADOR

The U.S. Committee for Refugees indicates that those in "refugee-like circumstances" are estimated to number at least one million with an estimated 500,000 in the United States and 120,000 in Mexico. UNHCR reports an additional 8,600 Salvadorans in Nicaragua that the government of Nicaragua claims to have integrated into Nicaraguan society. The Department of State Annual Report on Human Rights<sup>173</sup> lists 168,000 refugees in other countries, and 500,000 illegally in the United States.

## DISPLACED PERSONS

The U.S. Committee for Refugees estimates that the number of Salvadorans displaced within El Salvador is in the hundreds of thousands. The Department of State World Refugee Report estimates those displaced at 200,000. The Department of State Annual Report on Human Rights indicated that 155,000 Salvadorans are internally displaced.<sup>174</sup>

## RETURNED REFUGEES

The number of Salvadorans who have returned from exile is also difficult to determine. The Department of State, in its World Refugee Report, states that a total of 5,500 Salvadorans returned to their homeland from various countries in 1987 and 1988. According to the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, 8,995 refugees returned to El Salvador in 1987 and 1988 with UNHCR assistance.

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<sup>173</sup> Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1988. Report submitted to the Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate, and Committee on Foreign Affairs, U.S. House of Representatives by the Department of State. 101st Congress, 1st session. S. Print 101-3. February 1989. Washington. U.S. Gov. Print. Off., 1989. p. 562.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid., p. 562.

## MILITARY STATUS OF THE CIVIL CONFLICT IN EL SALVADOR\*

### INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

This chapter deals with the military situation in El Salvador. It discusses the balance of forces between the Salvadoran military and guerrillas, the current military situation, and the role of U.S. assistance in the war.

At this point, the eight year civil conflict in El Salvador appears to be deadlocked; neither side shows signs of being able to defeat the other militarily or otherwise force an end to the war. Most observers believe that, barring an unexpected change in the circumstances supporting or causing the war such as a sharp drop in the level of U.S. military assistance or an unexpected improvement in the political or economic situation, both sides in the war appear capable of carrying on the fighting at the present pace indefinitely.

The guerrillas are organized under an umbrella organization called the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN), with an estimated strength between 6,000 and 7,000 full time fighters. This does not include several thousand male and female noncombatants called "masas" who travel with the guerrillas and provide support services such as food gathering and preparation, and transporting equipment and supplies. For several years, the FMLN strategy has been to restrict its operations to standard guerrilla hit-and-run tactics. The guerrillas periodically attack larger targets such as military bases, but mainly conduct a campaign of sabotage and intimidation intended to undermine the nation's social and economic infrastructure.

Opposing the guerrillas are the Armed Forces of El Salvador (ESAF) which have between 45,000 and 47,000 in all services, not including the security forces, i.e., the National Guard, the police forces and the civil defense forces. The army does most of the fighting and is by far the largest of the services with about 43,000 active duty personnel. Both the army and the air force have been built to their present size with the help of large infusions of U.S. military assistance since 1980.<sup>175</sup>

The ESAF's substantial numerical and firepower advantage over the rebels allows government forces to move about the country with relative ease without fear of attack by conventional means. But the army cannot protect all parts of the country from guerrilla attack nor prevent small rebel units from moving into any department or moving supplies into the country. While the FMLN does not control any specific territory inside El Salvador, to the extent that it can exclude the Salvadoran military; the guerrillas have

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<sup>175</sup> See the chapter in this briefing book on levels of U.S. aid.