



# SPECIAL REPORT

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## ABOUT THE REPORT

In July 1998, a month after the renewal of violence in the southern provinces of Mexico, Prof. Michael Foley, 1997-1998 senior fellow, provided congressional testimony about the growing insurgency movement in the countryside and its impact on democratic reform and politics in general in Mexico. This report is an updated and more detailed treatment of the testimony (<http://www.usip.org/oc/congress/mfoley-testimony.html>), which was based on research carried out during the last several years in preparation for a book that tracks and analyzes the rise of Mexican guerrilla insurgencies during the 1990s.

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**The views expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect those of the United States Institute of Peace, which does not advocate specific policies.**

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*Michael W. Foley*

## Southern Mexico: Counterinsurgency and Electoral Politics

### Briefly...

- Current rebellions in southern Mexico represent clear challenges to the power of the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), which has dominated Mexican politics since 1929 and spring from citizen outrage at the abuse of power by the PRI, particularly at the local level.
- The current government's strategy has combined conciliatory gestures with military counterinsurgency operations and dialogue in attempts to buy support through generous public works projects, with largely negative results.
- Efforts at a negotiated settlement have foundered in the climate of insecurity established by government policy, represented by such incidents as:
  - the massacre of 45 members of the pacifist group Las Abejas (of mostly women and children) in Acteal in December 1997 by members of a paramilitary group supported by state police;
  - continued harassment directed at civilians, whom the army was supposed to protect in a proposed disarmament campaign that has yielded no results;
  - failure to prosecute the former governors of Chiapas and Guerrero, accused by the official National Human Rights Commission of complicity in massacres;
  - a sustained campaign of expulsions of foreign priests and other foreigners active as human rights observers; and
  - the public attack by President Ernesto Zedillo on Bishop Samuel Ruíz, mediator in talks with the Zapatistas.
- Both domestic and foreign policy interests of the United States will be adversely affected by a deepening of the conflict. Key concerns include potential increased refugee flows into the United States and continued economic instability in Mexico. Moreover, the U.S. runs the risk, through continued and unmonitored military assistance (ostensibly drug-interdiction related), of becoming entangled with an unpopular regime at the moment of its collapse.

## Introduction

The continuing crisis in Mexico's southernmost state of Chiapas, where a guerrilla movement emerged in January 1994, and in other areas where other guerrilla organizations are active, calls into question the counterinsurgency strategy adopted by the Mexican government since at least 1996, when negotiations with the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN), or the Zapatistas, as the Chiapas guerrillas are called, broke down. But an adequate understanding of the conflicts in rural Mexico and their meaning for democracy and economic stability in Mexico must start, not with the insurgencies themselves, but with the political context, including both significant movement toward democracy and continuing resistance on the part of elements of the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI).

While the PRI, founded in 1929, has long dominated Mexican politics, its most secure control has been exercised in the more backward parts of the country's most populous regions, principally the rural southern states; and political elites in these regions are fiercely defending their traditional control of local politics. In 1988, the PRI received over 90 percent of the vote in the heavily indigenous Los Altos region of Chiapas, where today the opposition Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) has claimed significant victories in many districts. The PRI's success grew out of the tight control local elites exercised over the electoral process much more than out of any loyalty indigenous peoples might have felt toward the ruling party, as the rapid change in electoral results after the Zapatista revolt of January, 1994, demonstrates. Elsewhere, particularly in the cities and the northern states, the PRI's traditional control rapidly eroded in the face of the economic crisis of the 1980s and the tentative political opening initiated in 1978. Following the July 1997 elections, the opposition ruled a third of Mexico's population in cities and regions that accounted for over half the nation's GNP. The PRI had lost control of the Chamber of Deputies for the first time in its history, and no longer had the votes in the Senate necessary to pass constitutional amendments. In this context, the "old PRI" of the rural fiefdoms of the south appears more than ever essential to the party's survival.

Guerrero state, where the second major guerrilla challenge to the government first emerged in 1996 (the Popular Revolutionary Army, or EPA), has a long history of insurgencies that have grown out of electoral disputes, sometimes between a democratic opposition and the ruling party, sometimes between reformist and more authoritarian elements within the PRI. All evidence suggests that openness to the EPA insurgents on the part of local people in that state and parts of neighboring Oaxaca stem from the bitter electoral disputes of the past few years, disputes in which the local PRI machine has largely come out the winner. In Chiapas, by contrast, electoral disputes were long avoided or suppressed. With the Zapatista revolt, however, they emerged quickly into view, with bitter struggles within communities over electoral outcomes. Starting in 1995, communities sympathetic to the Zapatistas began setting up "autonomous" municipal governments in protest of an electoral process they saw as hopelessly corrupt. The suppression of some of these communities by state police and federal troops was the occasion for the recent violence in the state.

Negotiations with the Zapatistas began in earnest in February 1994. They broke off when the rebels' supporters refused to accept a package of public works promises that failed to address fundamental concerns about democratic elections and land. Renewed after a brief government offensive in February 1995, negotiations were constantly marred by complaints of military harassment of communities sympathetic to the Zapatistas. Since the government's rejection of proposed legislation on the only accord reached (that of indigenous rights), military presence in northern and eastern Chiapas has grown, as have the activities of paramilitaries, at least some of which have been

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equipped, trained and materially supported by the state government (and perhaps by the Mexican military). An estimated 20,000 refugees have been generated by these activities and by conflicts within communities between Zapatista supporters and government loyalists.

Despite assurances that his government seeks a political settlement to the conflict, President Ernesto Zedillo has attempted to apply increasing pressure not only on the Zapatistas themselves, but on the civilian opposition in Chiapas. Following the Acteal massacre in December 1997 by members of a paramilitary group supported by state police, the President ordered the Mexican Army into the area ostensibly to disarm all paramilitary groups. Nevertheless, not one such group has been disarmed, and the military occupation has resulted in continuing complaints of harassment directed at precisely those civilians the army was supposed to protect. Neither the former governor of Chiapas, accused by the official National Human Rights Commission of complicity in the massacre at Acteal, nor the former governor of Guerrero, likewise accused of complicity in a massacre of peasants in that state in June 1995, has been prosecuted. At the same time, the government has carried on a campaign of expulsions of foreign priests and other foreigners active as human rights observers, and the president himself has publicly attacked Bishop Samuel Ruíz, mediator in talks with the Zapatistas. The government's intransigence and attacks on several "autonomous municipalities" set up by Zapatista sympathizers in the Spring of 1998 prompted Ruiz' resignation from that post this past June.

A deepening of the conflict has the potential to provoke increased refugee flows into the United States; further economic instability in Mexico, with spillover effects in the United States; and increased abuses of human rights and democratic freedoms. In addition, the United States runs the risk, through continued military assistance, of becoming entangled with an unpopular regime at the moment of its collapse. Although the Mexican government is extraordinarily sensitive with regard to what it sees as foreign intervention in its affairs, particularly when actions of the United States are in question, U.S. concern can provide incentives to the Mexican government to demonstrate the sort of goodwill, without which, progress toward a peaceful settlement will be impossible. Stronger congressional oversight, moreover, can ensure that U.S. military aid to Mexico does not jeopardize the U.S. relationship with a future government that may be built precisely on the repudiation of the policies of the current Mexican administration.

## **The Growing Crisis in Rural Mexico**

Over three months in the spring of 1998, the Mexican government broached a new, more violent solution to the stalemate in Chiapas, where government forces and the rebel Zapatistas engaged briefly in early 1994, only to stand off in long, drawn-out negotiations which broke down late in 1996. In mid-April 1998, joint military-police operations broke up the "autonomous municipios"<sup>1</sup> formed by Mayan Indians sympathetic to the Zapatistas in Taniperla and Diez de Abril; on May 1, the community of Amparo Agua Tinta was likewise invaded. As in the other two cases, there were multiple arrests and reported pilfering of commercial enterprises and homes by troops and police. On June 3, authorities entered the municipio of Nicolas Ruíz in another joint operation and arrested 164 residents, including the legally elected town council. The mayor, elected under the opposition PRD, had been expelled from the community by popular vote after he and a small group of followers switched to the ruling PRI. Finally, seven days later authorities engaged in gun battles with Zapatista "militias" for the first time when another operation invaded the municipio of El Bosque. Eleven people were killed, including two police officers. Townspeople claimed that several of the dead had been taken away alive by government forces. Their bodies were so mutilated on their return to the community that positive identification was impossible in some cases.<sup>2</sup>

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The new turn in government strategy prompted the resignation of Bishop Samuel Ruíz as mediator in the stalled talks between the government and the Zapatista guerrillas.<sup>3</sup> The attacks on the autonomous municipios followed stepped-up police and military presence after the Acteal massacre, in the municipio of Chenalhó, by paramilitaries linked to the local PRI and trained and armed by the state police.<sup>4</sup> Though the government's own National Human Rights Commission recommended prosecution of the state governor, who was forced to step down, no further action has been taken against him.<sup>5</sup> More significantly, despite government assurances that increased military presence was intended to disarm the twelve paramilitaries associated with the ruling party in the indigenous zones of Chiapas, to date not one such body has been disarmed; and one of the largest of the paramilitaries, Paz y Justicia, continues to enjoy significant patronage from Chiapas state officials.<sup>6</sup>

The new strategy brought protests from the Mexican Congress and civil society; and, for the first time, it prompted open expressions of concern from international leaders, including Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, and UN Commissioner for Human Rights Mary Robinson. Despite the intransigent response of the governor of Chiapas, who declared his state's "sovereign right" to rectify the irregular situation in the indigenous areas of the state, no new incidents have taken place. Nevertheless, the high state of tension meant that even when the Zapatistas declared that they would not interfere with municipal and state elections scheduled for October 2, 1998, several communities abstained from voting on the grounds that there were insufficient conditions for a free and fair election. In areas most heavily allied with the Zapatistas — and where the Mexican military and paramilitary organizations have the strongest presence — the abstention rate reached as high as 76 percent.<sup>7</sup>

The events in Chiapas were not isolated. Also in June, in the indigenous community of El Charco in the state of Guerrero, federal troops attacked and captured a group of peasants and their guerrilla trainers associated with the EPR guerrilla movement, reportedly assassinating some of the captives and torturing others.<sup>8</sup> The EPR first appeared in June 1996, and has carried out a series of attacks on police and military personnel in Guerrero, Oaxaca and other states, as well as in Mexico City. The EPR is considered far more dangerous than the Zapatistas, and its presence has prompted military buildups and patrols in some of the poorest states and remotest regions of indigenous Mexico, from the Gulf Coast in northern Veracruz to Puerto Vallarta on the Pacific and south to the Guatemalan border. The events of June, and the long and tense stalemate leading up to them following the breakdown in negotiations with the Zapatistas in 1996, mark the descent of Mexico into what threatens to become a long and brutal season of low-intensity warfare designed to shore up the waning power of the ruling PRI at a time when that party is struggling for electoral survival throughout the country.

## **The U.S. Role**

Since the emergence of the Zapatista rebellion in 1994, the United States has stepped up military aid and training for Mexico's small armed forces under the rubric of assistance for that country's narcotics interdiction effort. After the appearance of the EPR guerrillas, then Ambassador James Jones offered Mexican authorities "whatever they need" to combat the new force, which he labeled "terrorist," though the State Department has not decided whether to officially apply such a label.<sup>9</sup> The United States has carefully avoided antagonizing the Mexican government over the growing list of human rights abuses attributed to the military and civilian security forces and the paramilitary groups associated with both. In early 1995, moreover, after a dramatic collapse of the peso on the scale of the Asian crisis of 1998, the Clinton administration pushed through a \$20 billion bailout (with the International Monetary Fund and others promising an

additional \$19.5 billion), designed to protect overexposed U.S. bankers and financiers in Mexico and help restore confidence in the Mexican economy.

In a context of violent conflict in the Mexican countryside, these considerable demonstrations of commitment to the current regime carry with them very real dangers to U.S. domestic and foreign policy interests. Indeed, the crisis in Chiapas and other southern states poses a number of challenges for U.S. foreign policy: the risk of increased migrant flows as the conflict continues at the present level or deepens; the dampening effects of rural upheaval and the perceived political failure of the regime to reach a settlement on investor confidence and on continuing economic instability in Mexico, with spillover effects in the United States; continued abuses of human rights and democratic freedoms, at variance with traditional U.S. concern for these values; and the danger that, through military assistance and diplomatic support, the United States will become entangled with the repressive tactics of an increasingly unpopular regime.

The United States should be particularly concerned about stepped-up U.S. military involvement with the Mexican armed forces in the wake of evidence that many such military programs escape congressional scrutiny and, just for that reason, lack safeguards ensuring their effective compliance with U.S. foreign policy aims. As a recent series of articles in the Washington Post showed, foreign militaries are able to use military assistance and training in ways not foreseen under the terms of U.S. military assistance law. U.S. military trainers, moreover, readily admit that training for narcotics interdiction, the chief rubric under which military assistance has been extended to Mexico since 1994, could easily be applied to counterinsurgency operations; and some U.S. police and military training is explicitly designed to handle “urban unrest,” that is, political dissent.<sup>10</sup>

In a recent review of U.S. military assistance programs, the Washington, D.C.-based Latin American Working Group (LAWG) found that in 1997 Mexico ranked first or second among Latin American countries in the amount of military training received by Mexican officers under each of the various U.S. programs, including International Military Education Training (192 students), the School of the Americas (305 students, 34 percent of the total), and the Inter-American Air Forces Academy (260 students, 29 percent of the total). Sales, leases and grants of military equipment came to approximately \$144.7 million in 1997.<sup>11</sup> LAWG was unable to track U.S. Special Forces deployments in Mexico or training exercises by U.S. personnel in that country because relevant documents were neither available to Congressional committees nor forthcoming from Army sources when requested.

Both U.S. officials and the Mexican government insist that there is no genuine tracking of the uses to which such training and equipment is put,<sup>12</sup> lending credence to the belief, shared among many Mexicans, that the United States is directly supporting the government’s counterinsurgency strategy.<sup>13</sup> Even the appearance of doing so, however, risks putting the U.S. government in the position of being seen to support an increasingly unpopular regime in its desperate struggle to hold onto power. The recent recognition that drug-interdiction work with the Mexican military has been a failure, and Mexico’s announcement that it plans to scale back the training of its personnel in the United States should be the occasion for a thorough review of the relationship in the light of the dangers outlined here.<sup>14</sup>

## **The Political Context for the Insurgencies**

The risks inherent in recent policy become apparent once we put aside the notion that the insurgencies in Chiapas and elsewhere in Mexico are merely local phenomena and set them in their broader political context. In the most general terms, that context has to do with the eclipse of the PRI as the arbiter of political power in Mexico and the replacement — rapid in the urban areas and many northern states, halting elsewhere —

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of authoritarian rule with a pluralistic political system and increasingly democratic political practices. Lying behind the rebellions in Chiapas and other southern states, moreover, is a potent combination of explosive electoral issues, growing misery, and long-standing resentments at the indignities to which the indigenous population has traditionally been subject.

The past twelve years have seen a steady erosion of the PRI's power throughout the country, with the July 1997 elections marking a historic turning point. In 1976, the PRI claimed 80 percent of the vote for legislators; by 1985, the PRI's vote had fallen to 65 percent, but the party still claimed 289 of the 300 directly elected seats in the Chamber of Deputies,<sup>15</sup> more than enough to dominate the 500 member Chamber, and 60 of the 64 senatorial seats. Then came the cataclysm of 1988, when left opposition leader Cuahautémoc Cárdenas probably bested the PRI's candidate for the presidency, Carlos Salinas de Gortari. After an infamous "breakdown" of the computers calculating the vote, Salinas came out on top, but with just 50 percent of the vote and 234 single-member seats held by the PRI, or less than the majority needed to govern single-handedly. Despite a handy victory for PRI candidate Ernesto Zedillo Ponce de León in the August 1994 elections, the party's fortunes had continued to decline as the effects of electoral reform, renewed economic crisis, and the continuing turmoil in the countryside delivered more and more voters to the opposition. In the July 1997 elections, the PRI lost its majority in the Chamber of Deputies and its ability to pass constitutional amendments in the Senate. It also lost the mayorship of Mexico City to Cuahautémoc Cárdenas, in the first election for that post. In all, elections in 1996 and 1997 cost the PRI seven of 31 governorships, a third of the mayor's offices, and almost half of state legislative positions.

These victories for the opposition, chiefly the center-left PRD created by Cuahautémoc Cárdenas after his near upset of Salinas de Gortari in 1988 and the center-right National Action Party (PAN), were quite uneven. They were concentrated in urban Mexico, with opposition figures controlling most of the largest cities of Mexico and the most advanced states. While the 1997 elections were widely regarded as "free and fair" and largely unmarred by violence, the picture is rather different in the heavily populated rural regions that make up some of the last strongholds of the traditional PRI, where local bosses have often enjoyed virtually undisputed economic and political power. The Federal Electoral Institute found a much higher percentage of electoral irregularities in the southern part of the country (16.5 percent of election sites surveyed) than in the north, Mexico City, and the surrounding State of Mexico (9 percent). Electoral irregularities ranging from the burning of ballot boxes to inspection of voters' choices by party officials to failure to check for double voting were much more common in rural areas (14.9 percent) than urban areas (8.5 percent).<sup>16</sup> In Chiapas, particularly in the indigenous areas, there were locales in which ballot boxes could not be installed because of violence or local opposition; and in a few cases the boxes were burned. High rates of abstention meant that PRI sympathizers in some indigenous municipios governed with as little as 10 percent of the vote. Above all, the elections in the southern states did not put an end to the violence, which saw mutual recriminations between Zapatista and PRI supporters in Chiapas over killings and violent clashes, the continued development and deployment of paramilitaries, new attacks by the EPR in Guerrero, and increasing levels of military occupation from Veracruz to Guerrero, Oaxaca, and Chiapas.

## **The Rebellion in Chiapas**

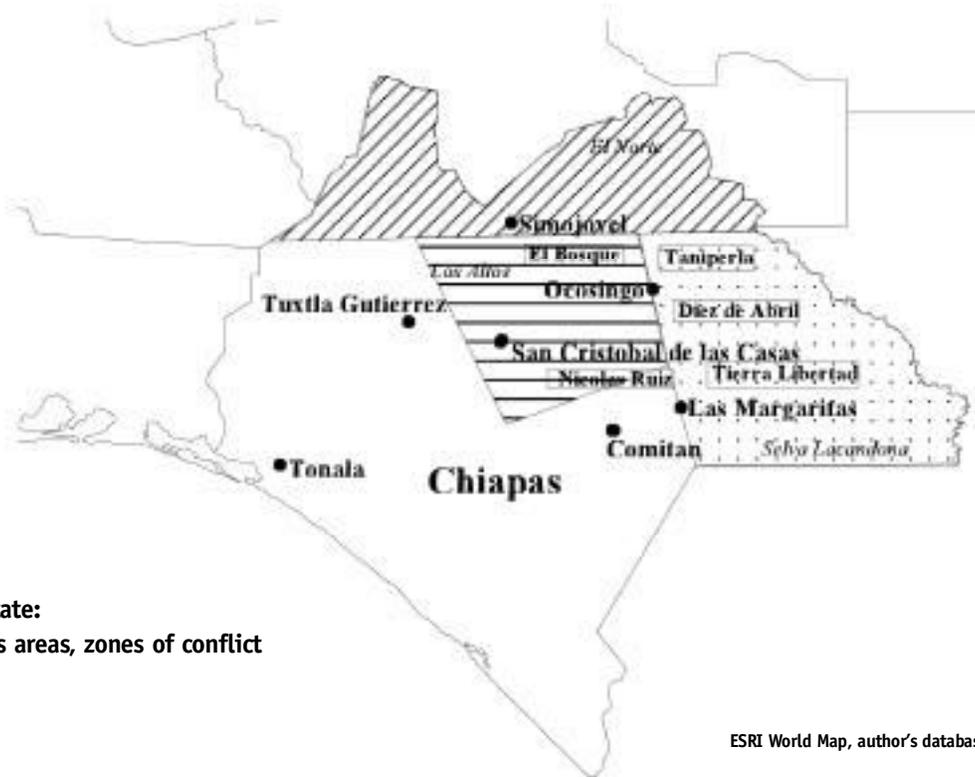
The EZLN, or Zapatistas, as the rebels of Mexico's southernmost state call themselves, is a mainly indigenous force from the frontier region surrounding the Lacandon rainforest. Initially led and trained by a small handful of radicals from northern Mexico (of

whom the charismatic "Subcomandante Marcos" appears to be the last remaining member), the EZLN has come to depend on an indigenous leadership, support from hundreds of indigenous communities in the region and adjacent areas of Chiapas state, and widespread public sympathy throughout Mexico.

Early New Year's morning, 1994, several hundred rebels, armed with everything from AK-47s to wooden mock rifles, seized the principal city of the eastern highlands, San Cristóbal de las Casas, and four other municipal seats. Stunned, the Mexican government was slow to react, but within two days unleashed a counteroffensive. Following brief fighting, the bombing of some of the communities from which the Zapatistas had come, and growing national and international concern about reported human rights abuses, the government of Carlos Salinas de Gortari called for a cease-fire and proposed the beginning of talks, led by a high-profile member of Salinas' party, Manuel Camacho Solís.

The tentative agreement worked out by Camacho Solís and the Zapatistas, in a dramatic series of talks, was rejected in a plebiscite carried out by the rebels in the communities that supported them; but the peace remained unbroken until February 1995, when the Mexican Army, at the command of newly elected President Ernesto Zedillo, moved to retake areas under Zapatista control. One soldier was killed in what the army described as a firefight, but otherwise the Zapatistas maintained their cease-fire. The offensive was called off under intense domestic pressure, including pressure from a newly assertive Congress, once the military had command of the communities in question.

Though the Zapatistas were now forced to remain in hiding in the further reaches of the Lacandon region, the talks, which resumed in March 1995, enjoyed the double patronage of a National Commission for Intermediation (CONAI), led by Bishop Samuel Ruíz, a long-time indigenous rights activist, and the multiparty Congressional Commission for Pacification and Reconciliation (COCOPA). The first served to facilitate the talks, maintain an open channel of contact with the Zapatistas, and guarantee the rebel negotiators' security during the talks. The second "accompanied" the peace process and



**Chiapas State:  
indigenous areas, zones of conflict**

ESRI World Map, author's database

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provided a direct channel to Congress to develop legislation in accord with whatever agreements were reached. Agreement, however, was slow in coming, in part because the Zapatistas complained of continuing military harassment of the communities that constituted their base, and in part because of government efforts to confine the issues in dispute to local ones — against the Zapatista insistence that was no less at stake than democracy in Mexico. Progress was finally made on the first item of the agreed-upon agenda — indigenous rights and culture; and an accord was signed in February 1996. Thereafter, negotiation was fitful and finally broke down when the Zedillo administration rejected COCOPA's proposal for legislation to enact the February accord, complaining that provisions for indigenous "autonomy" imperiled the unity of the Mexican state.

Besides the Lacandon region, Zapatista support is found principally in the Los Altos and northern areas of Chiapas, traditional indigenous strongholds, where mestizo ranchers and commercial elites have held most of the economic and political power, in alliance with the PRI. Up until the rebellion, the district returned virtually unchallenged votes for PRI candidates. In the immediate aftermath of the Zapatista rebellion, in an expression of pent-up frustration at decades of single-party rule in Chiapas, dissidents seized town halls in 19 municipios in protest at electoral fraud, the imposition of candidates for office by party officials,<sup>17</sup> and corruption. There were also demonstrations against local authorities in eight other municipios. Such actions stretched from the rich coastal region known as the Soconusco to the northern municipios near Palenque and included long-passive highlands municipios in Los Altos and traditionally conflictive jurisdictions such as Venustiano Carranza in the central Chiapas. State and federal authorities moved quickly to placate local communities and promised new infusions of the public works program known as Pronasol. But the August 1994 general elections demonstrated the sea change in popular sentiment. Where the opposition garnered less than 7 percent of the Chiapas vote in 1988, in 1994 Chiapas registered just 50 percent for the PRI, 35 percent for the PRD, and 15 percent for other parties.

Agrarian conflict also escalated, when peasants invaded hundreds of ranches claiming that landowners controlled more than the legal limit or had seized or occupied communal lands illegally. The government's clumsy effort to create a "loyal" coalition of peasant organizations backfired when militants sympathetic to the Zapatista cause took over the new organization, and thousands of mostly indigenous peasants supported them in ringing denunciations of political corruption, economic favoritism, and the government's efforts to put an end to land reform. Initially conciliatory, the state government came under increasing pressure from its traditional supporters, the ranchers and large landowners, who began quietly forming or reinforcing the armed bands known as "white guards" to defend their holdings. Many of these apparently mutated into the paramilitaries that began operating in the area with the acquiescence, and at times open support, of the state government and, it appears, the Mexican military.<sup>18</sup> After the February 1995 seizure of Zapatista territory by the Army, the state government began a series of violent attacks on peasant occupiers of private land; but the wave of land invasions continued to crest, with the numbers reaching 800 in mid-1996, according to one report by Human Rights Watch.<sup>19</sup>

### **Electoral Conflict in Chiapas**

The state and national elections of August 1994 also brought conflict, as surprising numbers of indigenous peasants became partisans of the opposition PRD. The presidential campaign pitted Cárdenas against Salinas' hand-picked successor Ernesto Zedillo and the candidate of the center-right PAN, Diego Fernández de Cevallos; in addition, the gubernatorial campaign in Chiapas saw Amado Avendaño, a muckraking newspaper editor from San Cristóbal, go up against the PRI candidate. Nearly killed in a still-unex-

plained automobile accident late in the campaign, Avendaño nevertheless completed the campaign with high hopes, as the municipal disputes mentioned above evidenced a high degree of unrest with the PRI. The official results declared Avendaño and the PRD the winner in 40 of the 111 municipios of the state, but gave the election to the PRI.

In protest at what they saw as electoral fraud, Avendaño and his followers inaugurated a parallel governorship (repeating an old tradition in Chiapas, where such tactics were common before the consolidation of PRI rule in the 1930s) and launched a series of protests that continued into 1996. The pressure was such at the national level that President Zedillo was forced to ask for the resignation of the officially accredited governor and replace him with an interim governor, still from the PRI. A national political pact hammered out in early 1995 among the PRI, the PAN, and the PRD apparently would have given the governorships of Chiapas and Tabasco, where another heated dispute was in progress, to the PRD; but the president reneged on the agreement under fierce pressure from local PRI organizations.

The result was a new series of protests and the decision, made at the last minute by the Zapatistas, to call for abstention in the October 1995 municipal elections. The outcome was devastating for the PRD, which protested Zapatista intervention loudly. Abstention rates as high as 80 percent were reported in some areas sympathetic to the Zapatistas and were over 50 percent throughout the state. The PRD unleashed protests at PRI victories in 25 municipios. In many areas, particularly in Los Altos and the north, indigenous communities, increasingly willing to identify themselves as supporters of the Zapatistas (though well outside the original zone of Zapatista influence), began to establish “autonomous municipios,” partly in protest at what they saw as the lack of conditions for a free and fair vote, and partly to carry out what they saw as the essence of the February 1996 agreement on indigenous rights — self-government in accord with local customs.

These actions exacerbated tensions within communities and among communities of the same municipio over political power, land and other resources, and personalities, as some sided with the PRI, others with the “autonomous municipio.” Religious differences contributed to the new clashes. In the case of the municipio San Juan Chamula, “traditionals” led by local political bosses allied with the PRI had carried out a campaign of expulsion against dissidents, many of them Protestants, some of them reforming Catholics, since the 1970s. Ultimately, they drove out the Catholic priest and broke ties with the diocese. In the wake of the Zapatista uprising, the expulsions increased, but so did the militancy of the expelled community, which began to arm itself against the traditional authorities.<sup>20</sup> In other cases, Protestants aligned themselves with the PRI against the Catholic majority, which was identified with the Diocese of San Cristóbal and thus, in the minds of many, with the Zapatistas. It was a largely Protestant paramilitary group, for instance, led by the PRI mayor of the municipio of Chenalhó, that carried out the Acteal massacre.

## **The Conflict in Guerrero and Oaxaca**

Electoral conflict intermixed with local struggles over resources likewise characterize the areas in which the EPR has been most prominent, notably the states of Guerrero and Oaxaca. In Guerrero electoral struggles had been behind the insurrections led by Genaro Vásquez and Lucio Cabañas in the late 1960s and early 1970s.<sup>21</sup> The uneasy peace that followed the destruction of Cabañas’ movement was broken when two successive governors took a hard line toward a growing opposition movement that eventually became the PRD. Contested elections, violent confrontations between partisans of the PRD and the PRI, and military occupation and action to ensure the seating of PRI mayors have

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**EPR attacks and propaganda acts  
1996–1998**



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marked the state since 1988, while much of the rest of Mexico moved toward a multi-party democracy.

The most dramatic demonstration of how far the political climate in Guerrero had deteriorated came in June 1995, when members of a militant peasant organization on their way to a demonstration in Atoyac, close to Acapulco, were waylaid by a group of State Police, who opened fire, killing seventeen and wounding twenty-three. A subsequent investigation, directed by the governmental National Human Rights Commission and substantiated by the Mexican Supreme Court, found that the police had fired without provocation, as part of a planned attack directed by their superiors and ultimately by then-governor Rubén Figueroa Alcocer, who subsequently tried to cover up official complicity. Although the police and their immediate superiors were tried and Figueroa was removed from office, neither the governor nor his closest collaborators were punished, and the interim governor who replaced him was, by all accounts, cut from the same cloth.<sup>22</sup> It should have come as little surprise when, at the June 1996 ceremony commemorating the deaths of the seventeen campesinos, a new guerrilla group, calling itself the Popular Revolutionary Army (EPR), made its first appearance with a formal announcement and a flourish of arms.

The EPR is a broad coalition of old and new revolutionary groups throughout Mexico, but its actions have been concentrated in Guerrero, neighboring Oaxaca (in areas also characterized by bitter electoral conflict), and, to a much lesser extent, a handful of other states of Mexico's south and southeast characterized by high levels of poverty, rural social conflict, and political domination by the PRI. By all accounts, it is much better armed and financed than the Zapatistas; and its politics, to the extent anything is known about them, are much more in the mold of leftist insurgencies of the past. In some areas, it appears to lean on older, clandestine organizations with a reputation for sectarianism and brutality toward both their enemies and their rivals. Nevertheless, it could not have emerged as a force without broad popular discontent in the regions in which it has been most active, a discontent fueled by both economic crisis and political exclusion.<sup>23</sup>

To date, the EPR has carried out at least 44 attacks in seven states and Mexico City, with an official tally of 57 soldiers and police killed and twice that number wounded. Informal reports suggest that government casualties have been much higher in some instances. Government forces claim to have killed two dozen guerrillas, and as many as

200 persons are in jail accused of being members of one or another of the guerrilla organizations that make up the EPR. Charges of human rights abuses have followed army and police operations in affected states as doggedly as they have done so in Chiapas, and in Guerrero in particular, just as in Chiapas, the army and/or state officials appear to have encouraged the creation of paramilitary groups among PRI militants to carry out a campaign of harassment and murder against dissident civilians thought to be associated in some way with the EPR. In January 1998, refugees from mountain communities near Atoyac complained of military harassment, the continued activities of PRI-backed paramilitaries, and the lack of security to permit a return to their communities.<sup>24</sup> In mid-June, 4000 Mixteco Indians demonstrated against military occupation of southern Guerrero and in protest of a massacre of guerrillas and peasants at El Charco,<sup>25</sup> by government troops on what military sources claimed was drug-interdiction patrol.

In contrast to Chiapas, international attention has scarcely registered the conflict in Guerrero, Oaxaca, and other states affected by the EPR insurgency. Yet the level of militarization on the coast and in the mountains of Guerrero, in some parts of Oaxaca, in the Huastecas region of Hidalgo and Veracruz states, and elsewhere appears to be nearly as high as in Chiapas; and the record of human rights abuses is every bit as serious. Troops patrol the roads and dirt tracks of these areas around the clock, at times sacking peasant homes in search of weapons or arresting suspects on the basis of informants' reports, generally with little hope of proof in court. Illegal arrests, torture, and harassment of non-PRI communities and ordinary citizens appear to have become regular features of life in areas of the country deemed possible strongholds of the EPR, at times with the excuse that troops are involved in narcotics interdiction activities.<sup>26</sup>

## The Deepening Conflict in Southern Mexico

The June actions in Chiapas were the culmination of more than a year of growing tensions in which dozens of people had been killed by members of paramilitary organizations and, more rarely, their opponents in territory ranging far beyond the locus of the original rebellion.<sup>27</sup> In the wake of the stepped-up official campaign against the indigenous supporters of the Zapatistas, the Bishop of San Cristóbal, Samuel Ruíz, resigned his position as head of CONAI in early June, and CONAI dissolved itself. Bishop Ruíz and the organization had come under increasing attack from government officials, including President Ernesto Zedillo himself, for their criticisms of the government's position on implementation of the initial accords.

At the same time, on June 9, government troops claimed to have stumbled upon a meeting of a small band of guerrillas and peasants in the course of narcotics interdiction patrols, in the village of El Charco in the state of Guerrero, not far from Acapulco. The guerrillas, who had arranged a training for members of a local "militia," were associated with a splinter group that had recently broken with the EPR. According to accounts from villagers, the troops arrived in the early morning hours, while guerrilla trainers and peasant trainees from other villages were sleeping in the school; government forces barraged the building with gunfire and, when the occupants surrendered, they dragged several to the town's basketball court where they were summarily executed.<sup>28</sup> It appears clear that the troops were tipped off and knew with whom they were dealing and that drug interdiction had little to do with their presence in the region.

The events of June appeared to confirm a long-term trend away from negotiated settlements of the conflicts burning in much of peasant Mexico and towards a counterinsurgency solution. After the Acteal massacre in December, the independent weekly Proceso published excerpts from a 1994 white paper by a former commander of the military in Chiapas advocating a strategy that included the training and arming of paramilitary groups, surveillance and harassment of civilian communities and organizations

***Charges of human rights abuses have followed army and police operations in affected states as doggedly as they have done so in Chiapas.***

sympathetic to the Zapatistas; “civic action” campaigns on the part of the military; and the financial and political support of local officials loyal to the government. Though both the government and the military have denied this link, the white paper describes with considerable accuracy the actual policy being pursued in rural Mexico today.<sup>29</sup>

Efforts by COCOPA, the multipartisan congressional committee charged with overseeing the peace process, to promote a political settlement have yielded little in concrete action, though the federal government has proclaimed its willingness to suspend the dismantling of autonomous municipios. In answer to pleas from several sides to negotiate, the Zapatistas broke their long silence in August 1998 to proclaim that there was no reason to negotiate so long as the government refused to honor the 1996 accord on indigenous rights. A Zapatista acceptance, in September, of a call from a wide spectrum of Mexican intellectuals, peasant leaders and political figures for a dialogue “with civil society” resulted in a notable convocation in San Cristóbal in November, 1998, but no movement on the government’s part and no return to negotiations. And while neither the Zapatistas nor the EPR show signs of disappearing, the other key actor in this drama, the government of Ernesto Zedillo, seems unable to launch a credible peace initiative; indeed, it seems intent on continuing the low-level war of attrition that has characterized most of the past four years in the indigenous zones of Mexico.

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## **Conclusion**

Despite significant steps toward a competitive, democratic system, Mexico faces an ongoing political crisis in the southern countryside, home to most of the country’s 17 million peasant farmers, many of them members of one or another of the nation’s 40 indigenous groups. The crisis reflects the continuing, deepening misery in rural areas, as a combination of trade liberalization and the persistent lack of credit and government support, which together have devastated agriculture. But the crisis is at base political — a clash between entrenched elites whose power is slipping away as democratic processes spread, and citizens eager for change and outraged at the corruption, manipulation and violence with which elites have sought to retain control. Federal intervention might have dampened the conflict from the beginning. Instead, two successive presidents have chosen to back the old PRI, replacing one corrupt and intransigent governor with another in moments of crisis and deploying the military in ever increasing numbers in a vain attempt to subdue dissent. As a result, the conflict has spread and intensified over the past four years, prompting still more repressive measures by state and federal authorities.

To date, the crisis has produced thousands of internal refugees in the affected states (20,000 in Chiapas alone by one widely accepted estimate); undoubtedly thousands more have sought refuge and more secure lives in other states and even in the United States. Some credit the Zapatistas’ occupation of 32 municipios, in December 1994, with being the spark that prompted the dramatic collapse of the peso that month. Whatever the truth of that contention, it is clear that continued violence in the countryside has a dampening effect on the economy, including on foreign investment. A worsening crisis in the countryside would threaten Mexico’s already shaky economic recovery. It is also clear that the government’s strategy in Chiapas and elsewhere has damaged Mexico’s reputation internationally.<sup>30</sup> The conflict has also contributed to the growing power of the Mexican military, which, despite criticism even from the government’s own National Human Rights Commission, enjoys virtual impunity in carrying out its missions in Chiapas, Guerrero, Oaxaca, and elsewhere. In addition to an influx of new equipment from the United States, including Blackhawk helicopters, the military has expanded the number of special airborne forces from two units in 1994 to 100 today.<sup>31</sup> According to the

World Bank, Mexican expenditure on the military increased from a modest 0.7 percent of GDP in 1985 to 1.0 percent in 1995.<sup>32</sup>

The United States has played a dubious role in this process. In understandable eagerness to maintain cordial relations with an important trading partner, the United States has refrained from criticism of the government's conduct and quietly moved to extend military assistance to Mexico, which traditionally has been wary of accepting U.S. aid. Military assistance and training have been justified as part of the counter-narcotics effort. Nevertheless, there are no adequate means to ensure that such assistance is not used in the counterinsurgency strategy that the incumbent regime has adopted. And there is considerable evidence that the United States has provided Mexican military officials with advice and information specifically oriented to the confrontation in Chiapas.<sup>33</sup>

Whatever the truth about the relation between U.S. military and intelligence operations and the Mexican Army's counterinsurgency campaigns, the very appearance of U.S. involvement is damaging to U.S. interests. The insurgencies in southern Mexico represent no possible threat to United States national security. Indeed, at their present levels they are not a significant threat to the Mexican state. What is threatening, for both the development of Mexican democracy and the vitality of its economy, and from the point of view of traditional U.S. foreign policy concerns, is the persistence of political violence in the countryside. And the Mexican government's current strategy has done vastly much more to exacerbate and spread the conflict than to calm it.

Pressing concerns for the United States, moreover, have scarcely been addressed by U.S. policymakers. The threat of greater refugee flows into the United States is very real. The danger that escalating conflict in the countryside could undermine the democratic process on the national level, even contributing to the possibility of a military coup, should also be of concern, especially as continuing human rights abuses lead to growing calls among civilians for the prosecution of military officers. Political turmoil threatens Mexico's ability to manage its economic crisis, just as the corruption of the traditional system has marred efforts to "modernize" the economy.

Such dangers call for the prudent engagement of the United States with the situation in southern Mexico. Mexicans are rightly touchy about U.S. intervention in Mexican affairs. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright's disclosure that the U.S. was "pressing" the Mexican government to find a peaceful solution to the conflict in Chiapas in June 1998 set off a storm of protest within Mexico. Mexico violently rejected the call of the UN Commission on Human Rights for an end to impunity in its treatment of indigenous peoples. And the country has expelled dozens of foreigners over the last year who have come to Chiapas as international human rights observers or to "accompany" the Zapatista communities.

Nevertheless, international pressure, both overt and quiet, has had important effects in Mexico, as the Mexican government's cease-fire in January 1994 attests. Mexican officials may protest, but they are more apt to try to satisfy the international community than to defy it. The United States, accordingly, should not hesitate to apply pressure, as diplomatically as possible, for a change of policy. Moreover, the United States should see to it that U.S. military training and assistance are not directed to bolstering the counterinsurgency strategy currently under way in southern Mexico. That may mean cutting back on assistance more generally. It would certainly mean ending whatever cooperation exists in intelligence gathering and in training directly focused on the conflicts in Chiapas, Guerrero, and other parts of Mexico. Above all, it would mean effective oversight of military relations to ensure that the United States is not seen as bolstering the current government in a defense of an unpopular and unsuccessful strategy, through its engagement with the Mexican military.

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## Endnotes

1 The *municipio*, or municipality, is roughly the county level of government in Mexico and most of Latin America and is the lowest politico-administrative unit.

2 Julia Preston, "Mexico Squeezes Rebels, Provoking New Grief," *The New York Times*, International, June 28, 1998.

3 Julia Preston, "Helmet Instead of a Miter for the Bishop of Chiapas," *The New York Times*, International, June 16, 1998.

4 See Julia Preston, "Mexican Gunmen Slay 45 in Southern Indian Village," *The New York Times*, December 24, 1997; Centro de Derechos Humanos "Fray Bartolomé de las Casas," *The Road to the Massacre*, San Cristóbal de las Casas, Mexico: 1998; Angeles Mariscal, "Privan impunidad y manipulación a seis meses de la matanza de Acteal," *La Jornada*, June 22, 1998, p. 1. A recent government "white paper" describes the killing as largely the result of a family dispute and downplays the involvement of state officials. Gobierno de México, Procuraduría General de la República, "El Libro Blanco Sobre Acteal," November, 1998. Available at <http://www.gobernacion.gob.mx/gEsp/chiapas/archivo/diciembre/libroActeal.html>.

5 Julia Preston, "Mexican Governor Resigns in Aftermath of Indians' Massacre," *The New York Times*, January 8, 1998; Julia Preston, "Mexico Accuses Policeman of Helping Arm Mass Killers," *The New York Times*, January 13, 1998. In December, 1998, ten other high officials implicated in the crime and coverup were formally banned from holding political office for ten years. Jesus Ramirez, "Mexican Officials Sanctioned For 1997 Massacre," Reuters, December 15, 1998.

6 The location and activities of the paramilitary groups have been documented by the Mexican human rights organization, Centro de Derechos Humanos "Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez," in *Chiapas: La guerra en curso*, Mexico City: 1998.

7 In the *municipio* of Ocosingo, which includes important Zapatista strongholds, federal troops were prominently on display in at least three communities, in violation of Mexican electoral law, and members of paramilitaries reportedly oversaw the voting in several communities. Juan Balboa, "En zona zapatista, abstención y operativos del tricolor para captar votos," *La Jornada*, October 5, 1998, p. 1.

8 Alvaro Delgado and Gloria Leticia Díaz, "Testimonios de indígenas confirman: Varios milicianos y dos civiles fueron ejecutados en El Charco," *Proceso*, No. 1128, June 14, 1998.

9 Robert Collier, "U.S. Offer Raises Sticky Questions," *San Francisco Chronicle*, December 10, 1996, p. A12. Collier reports that Mexican officials were embarrassed by the public offer, but did not rule out cooperation. Indeed, it is widely believed that the United States has shared satellite and electronic intercept data on Chiapas since the Zapatista rebellion began.

10 Dana Priest, "Free of Oversight, U.S. Military Trains Foreign Troops," *Washington Post*, July 12, 1998, p. A1; Douglas Farah, "A Tutor to Every Army in Latin America," *Washington Post*, July 13, 1998, p. A1; Lynne Duke, "Africans Use Training in Unexpected Ways," *Washington Post*, July 14, 1998, p. A1. See also Tim Weiner, "U.S. Training of Indonesia Troops Goes On Despite Ban," *The New York Times*, March 17, 1998, p. A3, and Tim Weiner, "Jakarta Dissident Questions U.S. Military Aid," *The New York Times*, March 25, 1998.

11 Adam Isacson and Joy Olson, "Just the Facts: A Civilian's Guide to U.S. Defense and Security Assistance to Latin America and the Caribbean," Washington, D.C.: Latin America Working Group, 1998, pp. 198—90. An updated version is available on-line at <http://www.ciponline.org/facts/>

12 Tim Golden, "U.S. Helps Mexico's Army Take a Big Anti-Drug Role," *The New York Times*, December 27, 1997, p. A1.

13 See Gabriel Marcella and Donald E. Schulz, "Mexico: Will a Larger Military Role Harm Democracy?" *Los Angeles Times*, January 19, 1997.

14 Tim Golden, "U.S.-aided Effort by Mexican Army on Drugs Fizzles," *The New York Times*, December 23, 1998, p. 1.

15 The remaining 200 seats are awarded by a proportional representation formula and were reserved for minority parties.

16 Mireya Cuéllar, "En sur y sureste, la menor calidad electoral: IFE," *La Jornada*, July 19, 1997, p. 1.

17 In many indigenous communities in Mexico, custom prescribes that officials be selected by the community by consensus. To do otherwise would impair the "unity" of the village. Communities have been willing to back the PRI in the name of unity, so long as the PRI, in effect, ratifies the community's choices. In practice, the party (or local power brokers inside and outside the indigenous communities) often chose candidates for their own reasons and insisted that the community accept their choice.

18 Excerpts from a military "white paper" prepared in October 1994 were published by the Mexican weekly *Proceso*, suggesting that the recruitment and training of paramilitaries, as well as community action programs of various sorts, should be an integral part of a counterinsurgency strategy in Chiapas. See Carlos Marín, "Plan del Ejército en Chiapas, desde 1994: crear bandas paramilitares, desplazar a la población, destruir las bases de apoyo del EZLN," *Proceso*, January 4, 1998.

19 Human Rights Watch/Americas, *Implausible Deniability: State Responsibility for Rural Violence in Mexico* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 1997), p. 33.

20 In a surprising turnabout, Chamulans refused to allow electoral booths to be set up in the *municipio* for the October 1998 elections in protest of the arrest of five of their leaders on a variety of charges, including homicide.

21 Armando Bartra, "Guerrero Bronco: Campesinos, ciudadanos y guerrilleros en la Costa Grande," Mexico City: Ediciones *sinfiltro*, 1996.

22 Triunfo Elizalde, "Sigue siendo parcial el cumplimiento de la recomendación, afirma," *La Jornada*, June 28, 1998, p. 1.

23 The active participation of local indigenous campesinos in the EPR in Guerrero and, according to government accusations, the entire town council and much of the populace of the *municipio* of Los Loxichas, Oaxaca, attests to the support the movement enjoys among ordinary citizens.

24 Maribel Gutiérrez, "Rehúsan desplazados retornar a El Cucyachi, en Guerrero; existe riesgo de violencia en la zona serrana," *La Jornada* (Mexico City), January 9, 1998, p. 1.

25 Alonso Urrutia, "En Ayutla, 4 mil mixtecos exigen justicia," *La Jornada*, June 16, 1998, p. 1.

26 A coalition of Mexican human rights groups has undertaken to document some of these abuses. See "Red de Organismos Civiles de Derechos Humanos" *Todos los derechos para todos; Violencia e impunidad en Guerrero. Informe de la misión de observadores de derechos humanos en Guerrero*, del 20 al 23 de junio, 1997.

27 See Centro de Derechos Humanos Fray Bartolomé de las Casas, *Camino a la Masacre* (San Cristóbal de las Casas, Mexico: January, 1998). URL: <http://www.laneta.apc.org/cdhbcasas/chenalho/informe/indice.htm>. This is a detailed, balanced account of the violence on both sides in the *municipio* of Chenalhó in the year preceding the massacre at Acteal.

28 Delgado and Díaz, "Testimonios."

29 Carlos Marín, "Plan del Ejército," *Proceso*, January 4, 1998. See also Centro de Derechos Humanos Fray Bartolomé de las Casas, "Aplicación del Manual de Guerra Irregular del Ejército Nacional Mexicano en la Zona Norte de Chiapas," chap. 8 of "Ni Paz, Ni Justicia" (San Cristóbal de las Casas, Mexico: October, 1998). URL: <http://www.laneta.apc.org/cdhbcasas/chenalho/nipazjus/8.htm>

30 In August 1988, a subcommission of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights called on the Mexican government to “give high priority to the fight against impunity for the authors of grave violations of human rights,” particularly indigenous people, referring to the situations in Chiapas, Guerrero, Oaxaca, and elsewhere. In October, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights took up three Mexican cases, including that of the alleged murder, by members of the Army, of civilians in the Zapatista community of Morelia, during the January, 1994, offensive. Both measures were hotly contested by the Mexican government. See Kyra Núñez, “Insta el organismo a reiniciar el proceso de diálogo en Chiapas,” *La Jornada*, August 21, 1998, p. 1;

31 Jesús Aranda, “En cuatro años aumentaron de dos a 100 las unidades de élite del Ejército,” *La Jornada*, September 9, 1998, p. 1.

32 World Bank, *World Development Report 1998/99: Knowledge for Development*, Washington, DC: World Bank, 1998. The report also notes the “significant” increase in poverty in Mexico since 1994, with 45 percent of the population surviving on incomes of less than two dollars a day.

33 Relevant newspaper accounts are cited in Brian Wilson, *The Slippery Slope: U.S. Military Moves into Mexico*, rev. ed., April 1998. URL: <http://www.globalexchange.org/campaigns/mexico/slope/>

## Other Resources

Below are links by topical categories to resources about the conflict in Chiapas from sources mainly active in Mexico.

### GENERAL RESOURCES

**Background Notes: Mexico** (May 1996)

<http://www.state.gov/www/regions/ara/bgnpage.html>

**Latin American Network Information Center (LANIC): Mexico**

<http://lanic.utexas.edu/la/mexico/>

**Federal Electoral Institute** • <http://www.ife.org.mx/>

**Partido Acción Nacional The web site of the National Action Party (PAN)**

<http://www.pan.org.mx/>

**Partido de la Revolución Democrática Homepage of the Party of the**

**Democratic Revolution (PRD)** • <http://www.cen-prd.org.mx/>

**Partido del Trabajo** • <http://www.pt.org.mx/>

**Partido Revolucionario Institucional** • <http://www.pri.org.mx/home2.html>

**Partido Verde Ecologista de Mexico** • <http://www.pvem.org.mx/>

### GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND POLICIES

**Chiapas** • <http://www.presidencia.gob.mx/pages/chiapas/chiapas.html>

**Chiapas - Gobierno del Estado** • <http://www.chiapas.gob.mx/index.html>

**Mexico-U.S. Relations**

[http://www.sre.gob.mx/comunicados/informes/1998/america\\_del\\_norte.htm](http://www.sre.gob.mx/comunicados/informes/1998/america_del_norte.htm)

**Procuraduría General de la República**

<http://www.pgr.gob.mx/frames/framei.htm>

**Secretaría de Gobernación (Mexico)** • <http://www.gobernacion.gob.mx/>

**U.S. Security Assistance to the Western Hemisphere**

<http://www.ciponline.org/facts/>

**U.S. State Department - Bureau of Inter-American Affairs**

[http://www.state.gov/www/regions/ara/mexico\\_index.html](http://www.state.gov/www/regions/ara/mexico_index.html)

### DISSIDENT POLITICAL AND GUERRILLA GROUPS

**Ejército Popular Revolucionario (EPR)** • <http://www.pengo.it/PDPR-EPR/>

**¡YA BASTA! (FZLN)** • <http://www.ezln.org/>

**Zapatistas in Cyberspace, a Guide to Analysis and Information**

<http://www.eco.utexas.edu/faculty/Cleaver/zapsincyber.html>

### HUMAN RIGHTS AND RELATED CIVIL ORGANIZATIONS

**Centro de Derechos Humanos Fray Bartolomé de las Casas**

<http://www.laneta.apc.org/cdhbcasas/index.htm>

**Centro de Derechos Humanos Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez**

<http://mixcoac.uia.mx/PRODH/default.htm>

**Comisión Mexicana de Defensa y Promoción de los Derechos Humanos**

<http://www.laneta.apc.org/cmdpdh/>

**Comisión Nacional de Derechos Humanos**

<http://www.cndh.org.mx/>

**Congreso Nacional Indígena**

<http://www.laneta.apc.org/cni/>

**EnlaceCivil** • <http://www.enlacecivil.org.mx/>

**Frente Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (FZLN)**

<http://spin.com.mx/~floresu/FZLN/>

**La Liga Mexicana por la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos**

<http://www.derechos.org/nizkor/mexico/limedd/>

**Mexican Academy of Human Rights** • <http://www.unam.mx/amdh/>

**Red Nacional de Organismos Civiles de Derechos Humanos**

<http://www.laneta.apc.org/vitoria/>

**Servicio Paz y Justicia** • <http://www.NONVIOLENCE.ORG/serpaj/mexico/>

### MAPS AND GUIDES

**CIA World Factbook: Mexico** • <http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/mx.html>

**PCL Map Collection: Mexico** [http://www.lib.utexas.edu/Libs/PCL/Map\\_collection/americas/Mexico\\_pol97.jpg](http://www.lib.utexas.edu/Libs/PCL/Map_collection/americas/Mexico_pol97.jpg)

### PEACE AGREEMENTS

**Chiapas (Mexico): Digital Peace Agreements** Liberation Front (EZLN) from February 1996. Part of the United States Institute of Peace Library's Digital Peace Agreements Collection • [http://www.usip.org/pa/index/pa\\_chiapas.html](http://www.usip.org/pa/index/pa_chiapas.html)