

THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SUPPORT AND VERIFICATION  
(CIAV)

**Demobilizing and Integrating the Nicaraguan  
Resistance 1990-1997**



**The International Commission for Support and Verification  
Commission  
(CIAV)**

**Demobilizing and Integrating the Nicaraguan Resistance**

**1990-1997**

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**ACRONYMS**

AMFASEDEN	Association of Mothers and Family Members of Missing People and Kidnap Victims in Nicaragua
ANPDH	Nicaraguan Human Rights Association
ARDE	Democratic Revolutionary Alliance
BED	Nicaraguan Special Disarmament Brigades
BND	Nicaraguan Development Bank
CAII	Creative Associates International, Inc
CENIDH	Nicaraguan Human Rights Center
CENPAP	National Center for the Planning and Administration of Development Centers
CHAP	Income-Generating Housing Project
CIAV-OEA	International Commission for Support and Verification, Organization of American States
CIAV-ONU	International Commission for Support and Verification, United Nations
CIVS	International Commission for Verification and Monitoring
CONOR 3-80	CONOR 3-80 Cooperative
CPDH	Human Rights Center
ENABAS	Nicaraguan National Company for the Distribution of Basic Grains
EPS	Sandinista Popular Army
FA-CIAV	Architecture School, International Commission for Support and Verification
FDN	Nicaraguan Democratic Front
FN 3-80	Frente Norte 3-80
FSLN	Sandinista National Liberation Front
IDP	Internally Displaced People
INIFOM	Nicaraguan Municipal Development Agency
INRA	Nicaraguan Institute for Agrarian Reform
IRENA	Environment and Natural Resources Institute
MARENA	Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources
MED	Nicaraguan Education Ministry
MILPAS	Anti-Sandinista Popular Militias
MINSA	Nicaraguan Health Ministry
OAS	Organization of American States
ONUCA	United Nations Mission in Central America
PAHO	Pan American Health Organization
PAI	Institutional Support Program
PAV	Self Help Housing Construction Project
PADF	Pan American Development Foundation
PSV	Monitoring and Verification Program
RAAN	North Atlantic Autonomous Region
RAAS	South Atlantic Autonomous Region



RN	Nicaraguan Resistance
TC	Tripartite Commission
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNO	National Opposition Party
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WFP	World Food Program

## **READER'S GUIDE**

This document is a partial description of the peace mission to Nicaragua conducted by the Organization of American States (OAS). It is universally known by its Spanish acronym, CIAV (International Commission for Support and Verification). A much more detailed description, including a full history of the negotiations that led up to CIAV and CIAV's activities in Nicaragua from 1990 to 1997, is contained in a document in Spanish, "La Comisión Internacional de Apoyo y Verificación: La Desmovilización y Reinserción de la Resistencia Nicaragüense."

Readers will note that the document presented here in English is by no means a direct translation of the document in Spanish. The differences in these documents are based on the determination that different audiences will be served by each document. While there is a definite need and much value for an extremely comprehensive description of CIAV, especially for scholars and students of the successful OAS peace mission, it is believed that the English edition should be more concise.

The focus here is on telling a story of a model peace mission conducted by an effective regional international organization. The English document borrows heavily from the Spanish and, of course, relies on the same fundamental sources for its information and conclusions. This document aims to be complete enough for most scholars, while also meeting the needs of readers with a more general interest in peace missions, Nicaragua, comparative politics of Central America, and the OAS.



## INTRODUCTION

To understand the full significance of CIAV, it is necessary to consider that it has been the only peace mission in the Western Hemisphere that was almost exclusively managed by the regional international organization, the OAS. In the simplest terms, CIAV was “home grown,” and, by relying principally on the Western Hemisphere – and its 34 member states – CIAV can be considered a model for conflict resolution in the Hemisphere. The OAS has gained the credibility to offer its good offices in the area of peaceful conflict resolution. Some analysts of the CIAV mission have advocated a much greater reliance on the OAS as the lead agency in the settlement of a variety of disputes. At a minimum, CIAV’s effectiveness and low costs, compared to those of many peace missions managed by other organizations, provide an option when international conflicts need to be resolved pacifically.

The chapter on Lessons Learned will more fully discuss reasons why CIAV was successful in accomplishing its purposes and why the OAS has solidified the qualifications that it has accumulated throughout its history more firmly because of CIAV. The use of unarmed civilian personnel, a highly qualified action-oriented management team, motivated protection officers from a range of countries and with varied training, and inspired diplomacy in the mission’s early days are among the other special qualities that CIAV demonstrated.

As importantly, CIAV assisted in untangling a politico-military conflict that had previously resisted solution. Efforts to bring the sides together in innumerable formal and informal negotiations and to disarm the Nicaraguan Resistance (RN) or Contras would have been a sufficiently daunting challenge for any peace mission. CIAV quickly realized that new challenges emerged once the political and military issues seemed to be under control. This required the OAS and CIAV to operate with great flexibility and understanding of the players, both established and emerging. Many problems required repeated discussions and even experimentation in order to reach a solution.

However, while some of the basic political and military challenges were being brought under control, and afterwards, CIAV found itself with enormous relief and rehabilitation responsibilities. At first, of course, its mission had to be directed at the Contras. Activities related to the former Resistance combatants were numerous and demanding. As progress was made with the former fighters, the OAS amended its official mandate to the CIAV in 1993, to include in the humanitarian efforts those Nicaraguans who had opposed the Resistance during the conflict. This change of mandate has led many students of CIAV to categorize its activities as having had a Phase I (1990-1993) and Phase II (1994-1997). This division is meant to be shorthand, rather than a statement that there may have been two OAS peace missions with the same name.

In fact, CIAV was a seamless mission. Firm success in the early years of the activity, which focused on the Contras, built the essential foundation for efforts that

reached out to the general population, strengthened government and self-help institutions, and helped consolidate democratic practices in Nicaragua. Together, these successes – and the two General Coordinators of CIAV – were commended in virtually unprecedented resolutions adopted by both houses of the United States Congress in 1998.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Insert number of the resolutions and possibly put them in an appendix.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Following the revolution that overthrew President Anastasio Somoza of Nicaragua in the late 1970s and his replacement by a government of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN), military confrontations broke out between the new government and its opponents. By the mid-1980s, the presidents of Central America (Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, and Nicaragua) met at the summit to discuss peace and democratization in the region. During one of these meetings, at Tela, Honduras, in August 1989, the presidents established an International Commission of Support and Verification (CIAV) to oversee the demobilization of the Nicaraguan Resistance (RN) and its reintegration into civilian society. A key component of the Tela Agreement was that the presidents invited the Secretaries General of the Organization of American States (OAS) and the United Nations (UN) to form CIAV.

The Tela mandate was to the two Secretaries General as individuals, rather than to their organizations. This decision was both a stroke of genius and completely practical. On the practical side, both João Clemente Baena Soares of the OAS and Javier Pérez de Cuéllar of the UN already had estimable reputations as diplomats and leaders in the Western Hemisphere prior to their elections to head international organizations. They were known and respected by the presidents of the region, and each knew and respected the other. The decision represented the genius of the five Central American presidents because they could deal with the chiefs of the OAS and the UN face to face, instead of assigning the peace and democratization task to large organizations that, like all organizations, have an institutional style or personality. In short, the presidents personalized the peace process that was to follow by their CIAV mandate and the selection of the two Secretaries General.

Each Secretary General had specific responsibilities: the OAS was to demobilize and reintegrate RN combatants in Nicaragua, and the UN was to do the same in Honduras. Subsequently, the 1990 general election victory of the UNO alliance and the defeat of the Sandinista government gave Resistance leaders the confidence to demobilize most troops in Nicaragua. This resulted in the OAS giving the major management task in the Nicaraguan peace process.

OAS Secretary General Baena Soares designated the OAS/CIAV General Coordinator as his personal representative in the management of peace mission activities. During the life of CIAV, there were only two General Coordinators: Santiago Murray and Sergio Caramagna, both Argentinians. It was the first time that the Organization had performed such a wide-ranging peace mission, which was deployed from 1990 to 1997. CIAV relied on improvisation, flexibility, and the constant redefinition of reintegration projects to respond to an ever-changing reality.

CIAV demobilized 22,500 fighters and repatriated 18,000 Nicaraguans from Honduras and Costa Rica. It distributed food, clothing, and tools to approximately 120,000 people, monitored the security rights and guarantees that had been made to

the former RN combatants, administered reintegration programs, and provided medical assistance to the disabled. Later, CIAV also mediated between the Government of Nicaragua and groups that had rearmed. CIAV joined the Government and the Roman Catholic Church in a commission to investigate human rights violations. Ultimately, CIAV assisted in the strengthening of Nicaraguan Government and grassroots institutions in local government, conflict mediation, and human rights.

During most of its life, CIAV was entirely composed of civilians who provided comprehensive support to the Nicaraguan peace process. Because it was a civilian effort, CIAV proved to be highly cost-effective. In fact, considering the wide range of its activities, CIAV may be considered one of the least expensive comprehensive peace missions in history.

Initially, it was essential for CIAV to establish the trust of the fighters seeking to be repatriated and reintegrated into Nicaraguan civilian life. CIAV's leaders and protection officers had to be highly flexible, creative, and empathetic to reach that goal. In addition, peace mission personnel needed to develop productive working relationships with officials of the Government of Nicaragua, the army and police, civilian organizations, and all political factions in the country. Innumerable formal and informal negotiations took place at all levels simply to begin the peace process that had been outlined in the Tela Accords.

Once the ex-combatants had been identified and disarmed, CIAV focused on a large range of humanitarian and development activities including the design and implementation of housing and income-generating projects. All these activities established a visible CIAV presence in former conflict areas, where it monitored and verified the security rights and guarantees that had been made to the former fighters. CIAV staff became known, respected, and trusted. They were not anonymous foreigners from an international organization, but impartial allies who were capable of almost any task, 24 hours a day, in fulfillment of their mandate. CIAV became the sole international institution responsible for the reintegration process and the only one that monitored the security conditions of the former combatants.

Most former combatants had come from and returned to rural areas. In the early 1990s, government agencies in former conflict zones were weak or nonexistent. As a result, CIAV began to be perceived almost as a temporary substitute government. This trend resulted in CIAV efforts to strengthen local institutions, in anticipation of its eventual departure from Nicaragua.

CIAV's most important activities involved the examination of the security conditions of the former Resistance forces and reporting on violations of the security assurances made to them in the course of their disarmament and repatriation. This effort, known as the Monitoring and Verification Program (PSV), and described below, formed the context of the successful efforts to reintegrate the Contras.

**CHAPTER I**  
**HOW CIAV CAME INTO EXISTENCE**





## **A. ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT OF ARMED CONFLICT IN NICARAGUA**

The Nicaraguan conflicts that resulted in the CIAV peace mission date back to 1979, when the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) led the successful revolution to overthrow the Government of President Anastasio Somoza. The Sandinistas or FSLN had been created in 1960. Its formation was the cornerstone of a movement against the Somozas, who had governed Nicaragua for almost 50 years. The family controlled the economy and the organs of state power, including the army, known as the National Guard. During the Somoza years, dissent was suppressed and representative government frustrated. The FSLN overthrew the Government in July 1979.

Many Nicaraguans initially welcomed the Sandinista revolution, and it enjoyed widespread sympathy in many parts of the world. The Sandinista junta based its policies on Marxism, aligning the new government with Cuba and the Soviet Union. This orientation generated mistrust among Nicaragua's Central American neighbors and, in the context of the Cold War, the United States. Sandinista policies eventually began to undermine enthusiasm for the revolution. Rationing, state intervention, price controls, and a land-reform program that favored Sandinista cooperatives over individual land ownership provoked rural discontent and eventually military resistance.

On many occasions this discontent was supported by armed groups among whom were members of the National Guard of the former Somoza Government, who had fled to Honduras. Most of the fighting occurred in the Central Macroregion. The fighting began in 1980 in the Department of Nueva Segovia and lasted ten years.

### **The Contras**

The first anti-Sandinista rural uprising was led by MILPAS (the Anti-Sandinista Popular Militia) in 1980 in Quilalí, Nueva Segovia. This was quickly followed by confrontations in northern Nicaragua and in the Atlantic Coast. In addition, a Miskito armed group, known as YATAMA, fought the Sandinista Government in the North Atlantic Coast. MILPAS and other groups in Honduras led by former National Guard members provided military training and weapons to the rural militias. Eventually, they formed the Nicaraguan Democratic Front (FDN).

Four main factors helped the Contras grow: the cultural clash between the urban-oriented Sandinista leadership and rural groups, Sandinista confrontations with the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church, the Sandinista-instituted mandatory military service, and the Sandinista's Marxist orientation.



Resistance fighter in the field

By 1987, various Contra groups operating independently formed a unified military command that called itself the Nicaraguan Resistance (RN). Later that year, the United States Congress approved a US\$100 million assistance package for the RN. Opposition politicians from Managua and urban areas of the Pacific Coast formed a Political Directorate to link the RN and the U.S. Government. To carry out military incursions in Nicaragua, the RN organized its forces in four geographical fronts: northern, southern, central, and Atlantic, although 80 percent fought in the north.

The war had a devastating military, political, economic, and societal impact on Nicaragua. As it intensified, the Government further restricted political liberties and the economic downturn worsened. Between 1980 and 1988 nearly 31,000 people died, 20,000 were wounded, and more than 10,000 were kidnapped or captured. The war forced 350,000 people to resettle internally and almost 200,000 abandoned the country entirely. The war affected 1,200,000 people directly, 31 percent of the economically active population in the 1980s.

By the end of the war, Nicaragua's foreign debt had grown dramatically. The annual balance-of-payments deficit reached US\$600 million, and annual inflation in 1989 surpassed 1,000 percent. It is estimated that 75 percent of the population lived in poverty and 30 percent were unemployed. By 1990 the standard of living had fallen to the level of 1950.

## **B. PHYSICAL SETTING**

Nicaragua has a land area of 130,668 km<sup>2</sup>. It borders on Honduras to the north and Costa Rica to the south. According to the 1995 census, the population was 4,139,486. The capital is Managua. The country is divided into 15 departments -- Boaco, Carazo, Chinandega, Chontales, Estelí, Granada, Jinotega, León, Madriz, Managua, Masaya, Matagalpa, Nueva Segovia, Rivas, and Río San Juan and two autonomous regions: the North Atlantic Autonomous Region (RAAN) and the South

Atlantic Autonomous Region (RAAS). For administrative purposes, the Sandinista Government divided the country into “regions” that include one or more departments.

Map 1

POLITICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION BY REGIONS



Source: CIAV-OAS.

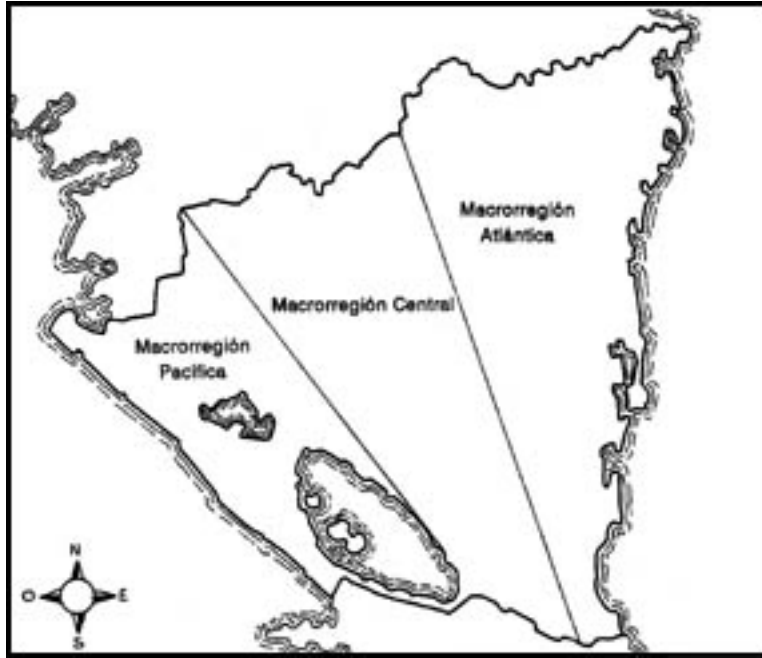
Nicaragua is also divided into three macroregions, each with its own geographical, topographical, historical, and cultural characteristics. The Central Macroregion consists of eight departments: Nueva Segovia, Madriz, Estelí, Jinotega, Matagalpa, Boaco, Chontales, and Río San Juan; the Waslala area in RAAN; and the Nueva Guinea area in RAAS. It is a mountainous and jungle area, with poor roads. The region is inhabited mostly by peasants. Thirty-one percent of Nicaraguans are considered impoverished campesinos.

The Atlantic Macroregion or Atlantic Coast includes most of the RAAN and the RAAS. It is ethnically, culturally, and linguistically different from the rest of the nation. Its ethnic composition is mainly Miskito, Sumu, and Rama Indians and English-speaking Creoles and Garifunas. Although it covers 56 percent of the land area of the country, it contains only 9 percent of the population. Poor social infrastructure and access roads typify the macroregion.

The Pacific Macroregion contains six departments: León, Chinandega, Managua, Masaya, Carazo, Granada, and Rivas. It has 60 percent of the population and all the largest cities.

Map 2

MACROREGIONS



Source: CIAV-OAS.

### C. DIPLOMATIC ACTIVITIES THAT LED TO THE CREATION OF CIAV

The five presidents of Central America found that the regional impact of the Nicaraguan conflict produced an increasing need to promote a peace process. First, as was said above, some of the other governments of the region were concerned about the policies of the FSLN government. Second, a number of them were directly affected after armed Nicaraguan groups moved across international borders to coordinate and launch military activities from their territory. Third, many were concerned by the intensification of the Cold War in the Central American context. Finally, the military activity in and around Nicaragua and the rapid decline of the economy after the revolution seriously affected the political and economic climate of the entire region. As a result, the international community participated actively in the negotiation process that led to the demobilization of the Contras.

#### **Regional Peace and Democratization Negotiations**

The Central American peace process began on January 10, 1983, on the Panamanian island of Contadora, when the foreign ministers of Mexico, Panama, Colombia, and Venezuela called on the Central American presidents to begin negotiations “as soon as possible” to end all regional armed conflicts.<sup>1</sup> Four South American countries—Argentina, Brazil, Peru, and Uruguay—announced their support for the Contadora declaration and offered to support the peace process. However, those four nations chose not to participate in negotiations.

Agreements were reached during summit meetings, beginning at Esquipulas, Guatemala, in May 1986 that continued the Nicaraguan peace process, led to the creation of CIAV and resulted in the eventual demobilization of the Resistance. Summit agreements also ended civil wars in El Salvador (1992) and Guatemala (1996). At Esquipulas II, in August 1987, the Central American presidents declared “Procedures to Establish a Firm and Lasting Peace in Central America.” This agreement called for regional peace, economic development, and measures for increased democracy, national reconciliation, regional cease-fires, fair elections, regional amnesties, termination of support of irregular forces by all governments, and the cessation of the use of foreign territories to destabilize any Central American country. Esquipulas II also established the International Commission for Verification and Follow-up (CIVS), composed of the Central American foreign ministers, the Contadora Group, and the secretaries general of the OAS and UN, to verify the agreements.

In February 1989, the five presidents met in Costa del Sol, El Salvador. At that meeting, President Daniel Ortega of Nicaragua agreed to undertake political reforms and hold free elections on February 25, 1990.

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<sup>1</sup> The participants in the Contadora meeting became known as the Contadora Group. The presidents of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala participated in the regional peace and democratization negotiations initiated at Contadora.

Later that year, at Tela, Honduras, the Central American presidents signed the Tela Agreement (August 1989), which created the International Commission for Support and Verification (CIAV) and announced plans to demobilize the Nicaraguan Resistance. The original intention was for CIAV to be in place by the following month and for the Resistance to demobilize by December 1989. Tela also set forth guidelines for the voluntary demobilization and repatriation of Nicaraguan Resistance and their families and outlined the security guarantees for those combatants who chose to demobilize. The presidents urged the international community to pledge financial support to the repatriation process. For its part, the Government of Nicaragua agreed to give land and provide economic and technical assistance for the ex-combatants.

As outlined in the Tela Accord, the CIAV mandate included:

- consulting with the Government of Nicaragua, regional governments, the Resistance, and assistance organizations in the implementation of the demobilization and repatriation process;
- publicizing the repatriation plan and providing humanitarian assistance by traveling to refugee and ex-combatant camps;
- supervising the distribution of food, clothing, and assistance packages in Resistance camps and providing medical services;
- providing alternatives to repatriation for those choosing not to return to Nicaragua;
- verifying the issuance of government documents to allow the repatriated ex-combatants to exercise full rights as citizens;
- implementing a voluntary repatriation program;
- gathering and guarding Resistance weapons and war materiel;
- dismantling Resistance and refugee camps;
- transporting repatriated former fighters to their communities of origin, if practical, or communities chosen jointly by the Government and CIAV;
- establishing reception centers where CIAV would provide humanitarian assistance, in collaboration with the Nicaraguan Government, and;
- establishing monitoring offices where repatriated persons could report violations of their security guarantees and visiting the former Resistance members periodically to verify that the Government was honoring its guarantees.



Cardinal Obando y Bravo, army commander Humberto Ortega and the representative of the elected Government, Antonio Lacayo, signing the April 18, 1990, cease-fire agreement

During the Summit meeting of the Central American presidents at San Isidro de Coronado, Costa Rica, in December 1989, the Nicaraguan Government announced that citizens repatriated before February 5, 1990, would be eligible to vote in the February 25 presidential elections. It requested that CIAV and the United Nations Mission in Central America (ONUCA) initiate the demobilization process. Stressing the political importance of this process, the presidents urged traditional international donors, such as the United States and the European Union, to increase their support for return and repatriation.

Events late in 1989 and before the April 1990 elections complicated and extended the repatriation of RN fighters. Of greatest importance was the recognition by Contra leaders that their leverage had increased because of the Tela Agreement and the proximity of the elections. There were both military and political aspects to this situation. The FSLN Government sought to use the Tela Agreement to prove its good intentions and use regional and international diplomatic pressure to ensure that the Resistance was faithful to the timetable and procedures envisioned at Tela. As it became clear that Violeta Chamorro and her UNO alliance might become a competitive force in the elections, the RN supported her candidacy and felt that delay in complying with the Tela provisions might improve their standing in the event of a UNO victory. Nevertheless, it was widely expected that the Sandinistas would win the February elections. When they did not, some of the key elements that had been agreed in August 1989 at Tela had to be amended and timetables had to be altered.



On April 3, 1990, the Central American presidents, including President-elect Violeta Chamorro, met in Montelimar, Nicaragua, to propose an April 25 deadline for the demobilization of the Resistance. Mrs. Chamorro was to be sworn into office on that date. The five presidents asked the U.S. Government to continue to support and finance the demobilization process. The Montelimar meeting ended the negotiations that had begun at Esquipulas in 1987.

#### **Summary of Central American presidential summits**

MEETING	DATE	RESULTS
Contadora	1/1983	Central American peace process began.
Esquipulas I	5/1986	Called for presidential summits to discuss regional peace and disarmament.
Esquipulas II	8/1987	Procedures for establishing a stable and lasting peace in Central America. Establishment of CIVS to verify Esquipulas II.
Alajuela	1/1988	Technical Advisory Group established to verify Esquipulas II.
Costa del Sol	2/1989	FSLN agreed to political reforms and free elections.
Tela	8/1989	CIAV established. Demobilization and repatriation guidelines set.
San Isidro de Coronado	12/1989	Nicaragua agreed to contact CIAV and ONUCA to begin repatriation and demobilization. Nicaragua authorized the repatriated Contras to vote in the February 25, 1990, presidential elections.
Montelimar	4/1990	Established April 25, 1990, demobilization date.

#### **Government Negotiations with the Political Opposition**

In addition to his negotiations with the Resistance and in accordance with his commitments to open the political process, President Ortega began discussions with opposition parties to broaden political liberties in Nicaragua. In 1989, the Government approved a new law on political parties that granted the opposition equal access to mass media and eased the rules on foreign and domestic contributions to campaigns. It also initiated the National Dialogue with opposition parties.

The climate of political liberty revitalized opposition parties, which then entered a new alliance, UNO. The opposition began to believe that the Sandinistas could be successfully challenged in the 1990 elections.

#### **D. STRUCTURE AND FINANCING OF CIAV**

CIAV-OAS, which will be referred to as CIAV in most of this document, was in place in Nicaragua from February 1990 to June 1997. Throughout its life, CIAV firmly established that it was a “home grown” operation, consisting almost entirely of personnel from the Western Hemisphere. It also was an entirely civilian operation. Both of these factors significantly reduced the costs of the mission and meant that CIAV

personnel were at ease in the Nicaraguan environment and familiar with its leaders and history. These and other unique strengths assisted greatly in the effectiveness of the OAS effort.

Santiago Murray (1990-1993) and Sergio Caramagna (1993-1997), both Argentines, were the only general coordinators during the life of CIAV. The mission's first Chief of Operations was Italo Mirkow, a Colombian, appointed in April 1990.

The OAS asked its 34 member states to propose candidates trained in social science as protection officers. The first group of international protection officers did not reach Nicaragua until May 1990 because of the need to secure funding. The largest number of protection officers was required was during Phase I, 1990-1993. The first 68 came mostly from Argentina, Colombia, and Uruguay. After resolution AG/RES. 1203 (XXIII-0/93) was adopted at the OAS General Assembly in Managua in June 1993, the CIAV mandate was extended, significantly amended, and amplified so that CIAV could also include all sectors of Nicaraguan society regardless of political affiliation. Phase II of CIAV began late in 1993 and extended through 1997. By 1995, the CIAV staff had been reduced to 17 international protection officers, and at its end only 5 remained.

CIAV also benefited greatly from a motivated staff of Nicaraguan nationals. The first 15 Nicaraguan professionals established a bond between former RN combatants and CIAV. They were chosen from employees of human rights organizations that had worked with the Resistance in Honduras and Costa Rica. At the height of its work, CIAV had up to 700 local employees, including many ex-combatants with a proven geographical knowledge of the region and organizational capabilities.

CIAV had an innovative, flexible management style that contributed inestimably to its effectiveness and reduced costs. First, the General Coordinator functioned as a personal representative of the Secretary General. This gave each of them a greater standing than a project manager and signaled that the General Coordinator could speak on behalf of the Secretary General in most matters. In addition to the line with the Secretary General himself, CIAV was given a great deal of flexibility in the way management and day-to-day operational decisions were made. The OAS Secretary General authorized CIAV to set its own organizational structure and to design and implement projects. As a result, it was able to respond rapidly and efficiently to the changing needs and events that characterized the repatriation and demobilization process.

This decentralization and autonomy allowed the General Coordinator and his staff to function without constantly having to coordinate financial and policy decisions with OAS headquarters in Washington, D.C. However, this enlightened and modern management flexibility is not intended to indicate that there was a lack of institutional support from Washington. To the contrary, relationships between CIAV in the field and Washington were founded on the trust that the Secretary General had in the General Coordinators. It was recognized from the outset that any attempt to run CIAV from Washington or to impose a structure could have a very negative impact on the project.

This attitude of delegation, trust, and operations-level management has not always been the hallmark of projects undertaken by international organizations.

Total funding for CIAV amounted to US\$60,555,922. The United States Government, through USAID, provided 96.46 percent of the funds.

**ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES**  
**INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION OF SUPPORT AND VERIFICATION I (CIAV)**  
**STATEMENT OF ACTIVITY AND CHANGES IN FUND BALANCE\***  
**From Inception, February 22, 1990, to December 31, 1993**

	Feb. 22, 1990 (Inception) to Dec.31 1991	Biennium ended Dec.31,1993	TOTAL
<b>Increases</b>			
Contributions			
United States – State Department	\$ 39,100,000	\$ 6,200,000	\$ 45,300,000
United States – Agency for Int. Development	1,376,790	25,000	1,401,790
Venezuela	10,000		10,000
Republic of Cyprus	2,000		2,000
European Economic Community (EEC)	294,670	644,695	939,365
England		22,071	22,071
Fund Vasco		34,244	34,244
Germany		20,035	20,035
Italy		91,875	91,875
INPRHU		10,263	10,263
OAS Treasury Fund income	551,267	49,653	600,920
Miscellaneous	1,348	30,698	32,046
	<u>41,336,075</u>	<u>7,128,534</u>	<u>48,464,609</u>
<b>Decreases</b>			
Obligations and Expenditures			
Operational Costs	8,138,050	3,891,608	12,029,658
Transportation	2,892,649	213,860	3,106,509
Food	10,216,525	(387,970)	9,828,555
Clothing	1,206,923	(42,885)	1,164,038
Kitchen Utensils	422,455		422,455
Personal Hygiene	232,355	(15,897)	216,458
Construction Material and Tools	4,369,353	3,720	4,373,073
Agricultural Tools	2,125,572	1,000	2,126,572
Negotiation, Land Survey other	207,561	49,000	256,561
Special Reconstruction Projects	3,117,476	851,648	3,969,124
Cash to Demobilized	976,357		976,357
Nicaraguan Repatriation Institute	822,077	519,824	1,341,901
Phase II Distribution and Delivery	405,216		405,216
Pan-American Health Organization	2,433,000		2,433,000
Resettlement of Disabled	2,690,112	655,529	3,345,641
Atlantic Coast Agriculture	935,241	64,759	1,000,000
Emergency Medical Assistance	189,571	28,540	218,111
Rights and Warranties Seminar		2,822	2,822
National Network for Justice		405	405
Humanitarian Assistance		25,000	25,000
EEC activities	297,225	755,448	1,052,673
Fund Vasco Construction Houses		34,244	34,244
INPRHU Construction Houses		10,263	10,263
Italy Disarmament of Civilians		91,875	91,875
Germany		8,401	8,401
Venezuela	3,900	6,039	9,939
Republic of Cyprus		2,000	2,000
England		20,891	20,891
	<u>41,681,618</u>	<u>6,790,124</u>	<u>48,471,742</u>
Interest due to contributor – AID	29,888		29,888
Transfer to CIAV II U.S.		63,412	63,412
Transfer to CIAV II Others		(100,433)	(100,433)
	<u>41,711,506</u>	<u>6,753,103</u>	<u>48,464,609</u>
Fund (deficit) balance at beginning of period		(375,431)	
Fund (deficit) balance at end of period	<u>\$ (375,431)</u>	<u>\$ 0</u>	<u>\$ 0</u>

\*\*\*The Secretary General of the OAS established an OAS International Commission of Support and Verification I (CIAV I) to account for the proceeds and disbursements pursuant to CIAV's activities. On December 31, 1993, CIAV I was closed and the unexpended balances were transferred to CIAV II (the Fund)."  
Source: Audit of Accounts and Financial Statements for the Biennium Ended December 31, 1993, Board of External Auditors.

**ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES  
INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION OF SUPPORT AND VERIFICATION II (CIAV)  
STATEMENTS OF ACTIVITY AND CHANGES IN FUND BALANCE\***  
July 1, 1993-December 31, 1997

	Biennium ended Dec. 31, 1997	Biennium ended Dec. 31, 1996	July 1, 1993 (Inception) to Dec. 31, 1993	TOTAL
<b>Increases</b>				
Contributions (Note 4)				
United States - State Department	\$ 1,787,100	\$ 6,350,000	\$ 5,000,000	\$ 13,137,100
European Economic Community (EEC)	207,276	989,504	-	1,196,779
Canada - Cooperation Office in Nicaragua	4,904	-	-	4,904
Other financing sources	11,494	-	-	11,494
Other income	3,497	-	-	3,497
	<u>2,014,270</u>	<u>7,339,504</u>	<u>5,000,000</u>	<u>14,353,774</u>
<b>Decreases</b>				
Obligations and Expenditures				
Operational Costs	853,280	1,719,591	691,183	3,264,034
Programming, Following and Verification	1,350,130	3,349,086	1,661,469	6,360,684
Tri-partisan Commission	4,247	227,868	87,498	319,603
Institutional Support	1,027,776	1,686,477	391,890	3,105,142
Final audit - Project closing costs	106,339	-	-	106,339
European Community - Nueva Segovia	207,409	857,363	-	1,064,772
England - Purified water project	-	1,178	-	1,178
Germany Microprojects	-	11,598	-	11,598
Canada - Rehabilitation of armed groups	4,904	-	-	4,904
	<u>3,553,084</u>	<u>7,852,148</u>	<u>2,832,020</u>	<u>14,237,252</u>
<b>Transfers</b>				
Transfer from (to) CIAV I - U.S.	-	-	63,412	63,412
Transfer from (to) CIAV I - Others	-	-	(100,433)	(100,433)
Transfer to OAS Democ Unprogrammed funds	(60,764)	-	-	(60,764)
Return to Donor - European Economic Community	(18,699)	-	-	(18,699)
Return to Donor - Germany	-	(38)	-	(38)
	<u>(79,463)</u>	<u>(38)</u>	<u>(37,021)</u>	<u>(116,522)</u>
Fund balance at beginning of period	1,618,277	2,130,959	-	-
Net change during period	(1,618,276)	(512,682)	2,130,959	-
Fund balance at end of period	\$ -	\$ 1,618,277	\$ 2,130,959	\$ -

\*The Secretary General of the OAS established an OAS International Commission of Support and Verification II (The Fund)

**CHAPTER II**  
**RESISTANCE REPATRIATION, DEMOBILIZATION, AND IMMEDIATE**  
**ASSISTANCE**



## **A. THE ENVIRONMENT OF DEMOBILIZATION**

The first and essential responsibility of CIAV-OAS was to coordinate the demobilization of the Contras within Nicaragua. Without the success of that first step, no subsequent elements of the peace process would have been likely to be completed. Naturally, the Tela mandate and CIAV's actions were not universally cheered in Nicaragua, particularly by those who had just lost the 1990 election. The seven-year history of CIAV, however, abundantly confirms the wisdom of demobilizing and dealing with the needs of the RN before any other needs in Nicaragua.

CIAV was originally created under the assumption that most combatants would demobilize in Honduras and Costa Rica under CIAV-UN supervision. However, the results of the 1990 election motivated the central command of the Resistance to set the environment for negotiations by disarming in Nicaragua. An average of 300 combatants returned to Nicaragua daily and, when combined with those already in the country, they resulted in a sizable army.

In addition to the fact that most decided to demobilize within the borders of Nicaragua, the Resistance demobilization was neither gradual nor conditioned on the fulfillment of government promises. Instead, it took place rapidly and en masse. Twenty-two thousand fighters demobilized in Nicaragua in less than a month. By contrast, only 2,600 demobilized in Honduras. It was as if they were "voting with their feet" after the election and installation of the UNO government. They were declaring a certain level of trust in the new authorities, whom they had backed before the election. However, this trust was by no means complete – it required numerous negotiations and adjustments to be successful. CIAV was continuously involved in all of these events.

Providing emergency and humanitarian assistance to this vast number of combatants in an exceptionally short time period presented unforeseen difficulties and obstacles to CIAV personnel, especially since most had never worked on a demobilization process. CIAV management and personnel dealt with the challenges admirably.

## **B. DEMOBILIZATION AND DISARMAMENT**

As was said above, the Contra leaders waited until after the 1990 presidential election, announcing that they would not demobilize before the FSLN Government had demonstrated a willingness to democratize. Resistance leaders maintained their military structure during the pre-election period. The unanticipated electoral victory of Violeta Barrios de Chamorro's UNO coalition put the demobilization process into a new context, pressuring the Resistance into immediate demobilization.

In negotiations with the FLSN Government before the 1990 elections, the Resistance made two commitments: it agreed to a cease-fire verified by the OAS, the UN, and a Roman Catholic Church commission headed by Cardinal Obando y Bravo and to move its forces from Honduras to Nicaragua and demobilize before April 20, just



prior to the inauguration. For its part, the FSLN agreed to end all military activities, protect the wounded and disabled Contras, and create a special transition commission composed of Government and Resistance representatives to verify the new agreement and secure international humanitarian assistance. Not surprisingly, agreements between the Sandinista Government and the RN were significantly eroded by February's election results.

Between election day and the inauguration of the new Government, the FSLN stated that the presence of armed Resistance fighters in the country represented an unacceptable threat. Outgoing President Ortega went so far as to threaten civil war if the Resistance did not disarm before Mrs. Chamorro's inauguration on April 25. The heads of the UNO transition team and the Roman Catholic Church both called for immediate demobilization.

During the electoral campaign, the Resistance had supported Mrs. Chamorro, associating her triumph with the victory of democracy in Nicaragua. As a condition for demobilization, it demanded the "symmetrical and verifiable demilitarization" of the Sandinista Popular Army (EPS) and the forces of the Interior Ministry.<sup>2</sup> On March 23, 1990, the elected Government and the Resistance signed the Toncontín Agreement, in which the Resistance recognized "the will of the people of Nicaragua to begin a democratization process," as demonstrated by the election results, and stated their firm intention to demobilize. This statement summarized the broader goal of the RN. Over time it became clear that monitoring the observance of the democracy and other guarantees made in agreements and by the new Government would become the cornerstone of an effective peace process.

Uncertainties about the Toncontín Agreement required representatives of the incumbent Government, an official of the transition team in the incoming Government, and the Resistance to meet at CIAV headquarters in Managua to renegotiate the terms of the Resistance disarmament. Holding the meeting in Managua presented a new challenge to CIAV, since also it accepted full responsibility for the safety of Resistance leaders during their stay. Participants included Antonio Lacayo, chief of Mrs. Chamorro's transition team, and General Humberto Ortega, Commander in Chief of the EPS, several senior leaders represented the Resistance. Cardinal Obando y Bravo, Santiago Murray and Italo Mirkow of CIAV acted as observers.

However, the new Government's decision to retain General Ortega as Commander-in-Chief of the Army (ESP) complicated the demobilization process again. On April 25, the date the Resistance had set to demobilize, only one combatant did.

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<sup>2</sup> In Nicaragua, as in a number of other Latin American countries, the Ministry of the Interior handles national security issues.

## Managua Declaration

Several weeks later (May 4, 1990), after a new round of negotiations, the two sides signed the Managua Declaration. In it, the Government reiterated its commitment to the physical security of the Resistance and to collecting weapons that were held by civilians. It also agreed to pull back its forces immediately from the security areas that had been established for the demobilization of Resistance fighters. President Chamorro also agreed to publicize an immediate troop reduction plan for the EPS and to establish special development centers to facilitate the resettlement of the ex-combatants. The Resistance promised to demobilize.

The new demobilization began in the El Almendro security zone. At that time, Comandante Franklin, representing the Resistance, declared that war in Nicaragua could no longer be justified since democracy had triumphed with Mrs. Chamorro's victory. However, on May 19, the Resistance command threatened to curtail demobilization unless the Government fired the army and police commanders. The leaders of the South Front of the Resistance accused the EPS of attacking their forces and demanded an immediate reduction in the size of the army before continuing their disarmament. Although some of these difficulties could be traced to the RN leadership, an implicit conflict existed between an untested new Government and security forces that were not quick to embrace civilian command.



Demobilization camp in El Almendro

The Resistance also accused the EPS of killing 14 demobilized ex-combatants and five civilians in Waslala. Although CIAV's investigations found that these reports were unsubstantiated, the demobilization ended.



Combatants arriving to begin demobilization process

### Managua Protocol

On May 30, 1990, the RN and the Government signed the Managua Protocol. The Government offered additional security guarantees, including the formation of a rural police force that would include ex-combatants and the establishment of development centers. It also promised a lump-sum payment to each ex-combatant and positions in Government ministries that would focus on issues of concern to the demobilized population. For its part, the Resistance agreed to demobilize 100 fighters daily in each of the assembly areas or camps within the seven security areas agreed in April 1990.

As a result of the Managua Protocol, the United Nations Mission in Central America (ONUCA) played a brief role to assist in the demobilization of Resistance forces. ONUCA troops were in charge of security in the areas that had been agreed. Each security area was surrounded by a 20-kilometer demilitarized zone to allow the Resistance members to enter without fear of attack. They were free of troops, militias, special security forces, and/or artillery. EPS troops in the demilitarized zones were controlled by ONUCA.

Assembly areas were established in the midst of the security zones that were run jointly by OAS/CIIV and ONUCA. They were usually set up within 24 hours. CIIV and ONUCA conducted safety inspections of each location. For security reasons, ONUCA soldiers entered each security area first, followed within two hours by CIIV and Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) staff. ONUCA staff collected data for a file on each ex-combatant, containing personal information and the number and type of

weapons that were surrendered. Weapons were turned in, which ONUCA eventually destroyed, and uniforms were collected. The resistance members then received a certificate that the first stage of the demobilization procedure had been carried out, known as a pink card because of the color of the paper it was printed on. The pink card allowed the disarmed RN members to meet with CIAV staff. These steps preserved the purely civilian nature of the OAS peace mission by not mixing the functions of disarmament with those of repatriation and reintegration.

CIAV staff registered each ex-combatant reporting to the assembly area. It opened a personal file for each including the name, *nom de guerre*, age, family size, education, years at war, last place of residence in Nicaragua, and other personal data. It prepared a similar file on the RN member's family.<sup>3</sup> After these files were complete, each combatant received a photo identification card showing that the bearer was a demobilized member of the Resistance and, as such, was under the protection of the OAS/CIAV. The combatants were then referred to the PAHO medical staff.

PAHO provided a 144-member team of doctors, paramedics, and administrative staff to assess and supply medical assistance to all Resistance fighters in the assembly areas. The team performed 17,711 complete physical exams, including malaria and parasite treatments. Although 291 people had to be hospitalized, the majority of the demobilized fighters were in reasonably good health. All people registered at the reception centers were tested for HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. PAHO technical staff built latrines, certified water quality, and maintained overall health and sanitation conditions at the reception centers.

At the conclusion of the demobilization process, CIAV staff transported the ex-combatants to the resettlement areas that had been selected.

Obtaining the needed food, clothing, and other assistance for the demobilization process was a major challenge for CIAV. The tight demobilization schedule did not allow enough time either for procurement or for thorough construction in the assembly areas. There was also a dispute about the number of ex-combatants to be demobilized that complicated the purchasing, warehousing, and transportation of goods for the assembly areas. Obtaining the funding for these activities also took longer than expected.

### **C. REPATRIATION PROGRAM**

In addition to the demobilization of the Resistance, the Tela Agreement promised that ex-combatants and their families would be repatriated from Honduras and Costa Rica to Nicaragua. Tela required CIAV to establish reception centers and verify that the conditions existed to reintegrate fully into civilian life. As a result, CIAV designed and implemented a monitoring system so that former RN members and their families could

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<sup>3</sup> CIAV defined "family" as the combatant's spouse, children, siblings under 16, and parents and grandparents.

file complaints on violations of their security rights and guarantees that had been made in demobilization agreements.

From July to November 1990, CIAV and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) helped to repatriate 18,179 people, almost all of whom (98.78 percent) came from Honduras and the rest from Costa Rica. UNHCR was responsible for transportation from camps in Honduras to the Nicaraguan border. Once they were inside Nicaragua, CIAV transported them to reception centers.

During July and August 1990, CIAV repatriated 250 people every other week and eventually increased that number to 300 biweekly. The number of incoming former combatants fluctuated widely because of weather conditions and other factors. The number of repatriation requests eventually declined substantially, permitting CIAV and UNHCR to close down the activity on November 28.

There were four reception centers. For those whose ultimate destination was distant, there were four transit centers through which they passed in stages. The location and capacity of the centers were determined by the information gathered by UNHCR on their origin and final destinations. Three were for former combatants from Honduras and one, in Managua, was for those from Costa Rica. Because repatriations from Costa Rica were so few, the Managua center was used only once. After it was closed, those returning from Costa Rica went through a transit center in Juigalpa.

<b>LOCATION OF RECEPTION AND TRANSIT CENTERS</b>	
<b><u>RECEPTION CENTERS</u></b>	<b><u>TRANSIT CENTERS</u></b>
Jalapa (Nueva Segovia) Condega (Estelí) San Ramón (Estelí) Managua (Managua)	Juigalpa (Chontales) Matagalpa (Matagalpa) Puerto Cabezas (RAAN) Wiwilí (Jinotega)

The centers were managed by CIAV's international staff, with an average of 30 Nicaraguan administrative and support employees at each. Upon their arrival, CIAV registered the names in a database for identification and to assist in designing future programs based on the needs of the former RN fighters and their resettlement location. Heads of household received an assistance form that entitled them to humanitarian aid in the months immediately after they were repatriated. A PAHO medical team evaluated their health needs and provided any needed care.

CIAV organized a 70-truck fleet to transport ex-combatants being repatriated to transit centers and to their final resettlement location.

CIAV staff distributed clothes, including clothing and diapers for children, a drinking glass, a plate, flatware, and a blanket to the returnees. The food rations included rice, beans, meat, vegetables, eggs, fruits, cheese, soup, tortillas, and coffee.

<b>Monthly repatriations</b>	
<b>Month</b>	<b>Number</b>
July 1990	2,221
August 1990	6,085
September 1990	4,752
October 1990	3,830
November 1990	1,291
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>18,179</b>

<b>Country of Origin of RN Fighters</b>	
<b>Country</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Honduras	99.3
Costa Rica	0.7

<b>Final Destination of Repatriated RN</b>	
<b>Region</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Region I	46.0 (Nueva Segovia: 33%)
Region VI	35.02 (Jinotega: 28%)
Region II	5.09
RAAN	4.60
Region V	3.93
Río San Juan	2.37
Region IV	0.40
RAAS	0.31
Other	12.28

<b>Preferred Resettlement Location</b>	
<b>Location</b>	<b>Number</b>
Wiwilí	1,735
Quilalí	1,183
Jalapa	995
Ocotal	840
Wamblán	793
Somoto	592

<b>Population by Reception Center</b>	
<b>Reception Center</b>	<b>Number</b>
San Ramón	8,080
Jalapa	6,238

Condega	3,087
Managua	774
Total	18,179

<b>Population by Transit Center</b>	
<b>Center</b>	<b>No. people</b>
Matagalpa	5,287
Wiwilí	2,893
Juigalpa	552
Puerto Cabezas	232
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,964 (49.3%)</b>

Source: CIAV-OAS.

#### D. HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Once the former combatants returned to their hometowns, most found themselves unemployed, with few prospects and no home. In this respect, their economic and living conditions were at least as bad as before the war. For example, although 71 percent were farmers, 76 percent of those owned no land. Although they considered themselves the victors in the war and the architects of democracy, they were left with only CIAV demobilization packages. This unacceptable situation could, and sometimes did, turn into a tinderbox that CIAV had to address as part of its responsibilities to promote an enduring peace.

Beginning in July 1990, CIAV began an Immediate Assistance Program to provide basic resettlement assistance to former combatants until the Government could open the development centers that had been promised during demobilization negotiations. During the early stages of reintegration, CIAV's Immediate Assistance Program was the only real help available to ex-combatants and repatriated citizens. In a second phase, known as the Production Strengthening Program, seeds and tools, chickens and livestock, and other agricultural needs were supplied.

For a variety of reasons, the Government proved unable to carry out its reintegration programs through the development service centers. Therefore, CIAV had to implement its own comprehensive reintegration programs.



Food preparation for demobilized fighters and their families

#### Immediate Assistance Program

CIAV's Immediate Assistance Program was originally intended to assist 73,000 people through February 1991, but it ultimately served 120,000 through August 1992.

When the program commenced, CIAV signed an agreement with the Nicaraguan National Company for the Distribution of Basic Grains (ENABAS) to allow its nationwide



network to be used to store and distribute CIAV assistance packages at a mutually agreed price. This arrangement failed when it ran into the political obstacle of ENABAS employees refusing to work because the project assisted ex-Resistance members.

This forced CIAV to set up its own distribution system in a few days, including a central warehouse in Managua, six regional warehouses, 11 local warehouses, and 232 distribution outlets. The Managua warehouse handled procurement and distributed the assistance packages to the regional warehouses each month. The packages were then transported to local warehouses or directly to distribution outlets. The packages contained enough for a family of four except in the Atlantic Coast region, where the family unit size was estimated to be six. Packages were delivered to heads of household with CIAV identification cards. A large number of demobilized fighters volunteered to work in the distribution system.

The magnitude of these tasks demanded a large staff. At the height of the distribution process, CIAV employed 700 Nicaraguans, mostly former combatants. This created employment opportunities and reduced the number of international employees.

Frequent movement of former fighters from one town to another in search of permanent homes complicated the distribution system. Since the shipments were scheduled monthly, items would often arrive at outlets from which a number of recipients had moved since the orders were placed.

Each package included food, kitchenware, clothing, personal-hygiene products, housing construction material, and agricultural and work tools as listed below.

Category	Product	Total Quantity Distributed
Food	Rice, beans, corn drink, salt, sugar, flour, milk, coffee, cooking oil, soup	390,000 quintals (100 kilograms or 220 pounds)
Kitchenware	Spoon, plate, plastic glass, cooking pot, pitcher, serving spoon, bucket	425,000 units
Clothing	Underwear, pants, dress, shirt/blouse, boots	370,000 units
Hygiene Products	Toothbrushes & paste, soap	1,050,000 units
Agricultural & Construction Materials	Machetes, sharpeners, hoes, hatchet, saw, hammer, roofing zinc, nails	183,000 work tools 433,000 sheets of roofing zinc 562,000 pounds of nails

Source: CIAV-OAS.

In all, the Immediate Assistance program assisted 120,000 people. CIAV delivered food to former combatants, the repatriated, and their families regularly through August 1992. The other products were distributed only once.

<b>IMMEDIATE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM COSTS INCLUDING ASSISTANCE PROVIDED DURING DEMOBILIZATION AND REPATRIATION</b>			
<b>Item</b>	<b>Total (US\$)</b>	<b>Program Budget (%)</b>	<b>CIAV Budget (%)</b>
Transportation	3,106,509.00	14.15	5.13
Food	9,828,555.00	44.78	16.23
Clothing	1,164,038.00	5.30	1.92
Kitchenware	422,455.00	1.92	0.70
Hygiene items	216,458.00	1.00	0.36
Tools and construction materials	4,373,073.00	19.92	7.22
Phase II (2-1991/8-92)	405,216.00	1.85	0.67
PAHO	2,433,000.00	11.08	4.02
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$21,949,304.00</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>36.25</b>

Source: CIAV-OAS.

On the assumption that the Government would provide land to former combatants, CIAV implemented its Production Strengthening Program, for the 71 percent of former Resistance combatants who wanted to resume farming but lacked capital or credit. The program also supported demobilized fighters who went back to fishing. The total program cost US\$3,030,374.37.



Preparing kits for distribution to demobilized resistance fighters

<b>PRODUCTION STRENGTHENING PROGRAM COSTS</b>			
<b>Project</b>	<b>Total cost (US\$)</b>	<b>Total Program Cost (%)</b>	<b>Total CIAV budget (%)</b>
Land Identification	15,721.00	0.52	0.03
Tools	2,402,432.40	79.28	3.97
Agricultural projects	154,281.46	5.09	0.25
Poultry project	57,051.47	1.88	0.09
Swine project	62,935.70	2.08	0.10
Livestock project	185,994.61	6.14	0.31
Fishing project	151,957.73	5.01	0.25
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$3,030,374.37</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>5.00</b>

Source: CIAV-OAS.

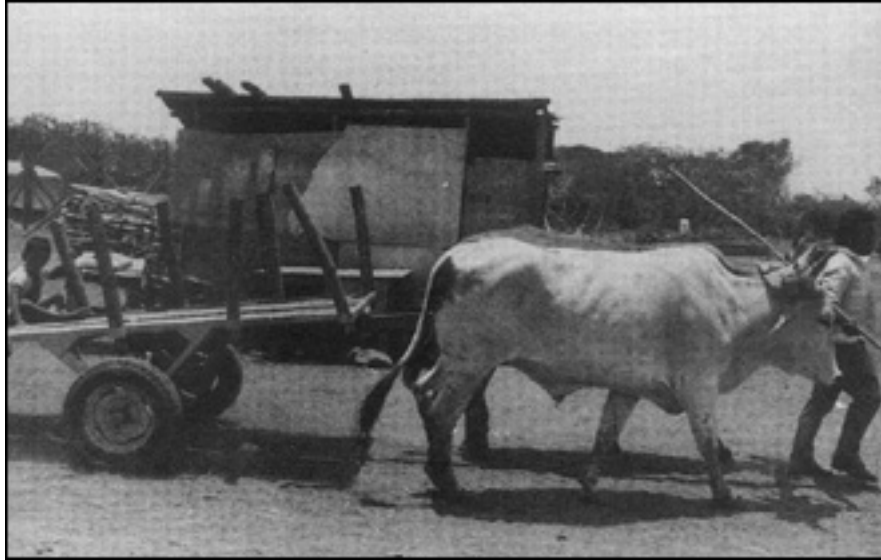
The Government had based its reintegration program on the development centers concept contained in the Managua Protocol. These centers or poles were to be “an enclave, clearly defined geographically, where the Government would implement individual or group projects for the benefit of the demobilized and adjacent communities.” Each development center was to have a municipal area for schools, health clinics, and warehouses; a housing area; areas for agricultural and livestock projects; water and power systems; and roads and streets.

The Government also promised to provide uncontested and properly titled land to former combatants within the development centers and resettlement assistance to those who chose to remain outside. It had serious difficulties in putting this plan into effect.

To assist the Government in its reintegration efforts, CIAV identified available agricultural land. It provided financial assistance to the National Center for the Planning and Administration of Development Centers (CENPAP), which had been created to organize and conduct agricultural, educational, and economic development projects and distributed seeds and tools, livestock, and chickens to those who had access to land. In spite of multiple difficulties, the projects were relatively successful. For example, the bean harvest by ex-combatants in 1990-1991 stabilized prices and lowered imports from Honduras.

#### Land Identification Program

The land program was intended to facilitate grants to former combatants. CIAV ran the project along with CENPAP.



Livestock contributed by CIAV to strengthen agricultural production

A CIAV-financed technical team conducted a census of the land assigned by the Government to ex-combatants. CIAV, the former combatants, and the Nicaraguan Institute for Agrarian Reform (INRA) identified, measured, and cleared the available land. CIAV also conducted meetings between the Government, landowners, land occupants, and potential new residents to discuss ownership issues. Although title disputes prevented most of the land identified by CENPAP from being distributed, the information that had been compiled became the foundation of the National Cadastral Survey, Title, and Registration Program implemented by INRA and financed by the World Bank.

#### Animals, Tools, and Other Inputs

CIAV-sponsored production-strengthening projects had a significant impact on the ability of former combatants to return to farming and fishing. The project distributed approximately 100,000 machetes and more than 20,000 hoes and axes. It also financed 20 percent of the loans taken out by cooperatives consisting of demobilized fighters in Region III to buy five tractors, four plows, and three planters for 320 families. CIAV distributed 76,000 quintals of seed, 30,000 quintals of fertilizer, and other agricultural needs for 20,000 demobilized RN combatants. During 1990-1991 CIAV-sponsored farm projects harvested 82,000 metric tons valued at US\$17 million. Former combatants invested part of the earnings in new projects.

CIAV also delivered 1,100 pigs, 303 bull calves, 220 cows, 208 oxen, 114 heifers, 24 bulls, seven horses, and seven mules to the former combatants. Training was given in the use of oxen for farming. A barnyard-fowl program distributed 47,325 chicks, chicken wire, and chicken feed to former fighters to promote chicken raising as an income-generating activity and improve the diet by introducing eggs and poultry.

In Puerto Cabezas, CIAV financed a cold-storage facility and an ice-making plant for the fishing industry and distributed 25 outboard motors and fishing equipment. In 1991, it helped repair and outfit 20 abandoned Russian-built fishing boats, which were transported from the Pacific Coast to the North Atlantic Region and distributed to demobilized Miskitos. CIAV also financed a passenger- and cargo-boat-building cooperative in the Río Coco region that received technical assistance, an electricity plant, and tools.

#### Assistance for Disabled Former Combatants

CIAV's project for the disabled had rehabilitation and reintegration components. The rehabilitation component provided medical assistance and physical therapy, and the reintegration component offered training, referral, and other services to smooth the path to civilian life.

From the outset of the peace implementation process, medical assistance to disabled RN ex-combatants was a major concern of CIAV's. Creative Associates International, Inc. (CAII), a U.S. consulting firm specializing in demobilization and reintegration programs, was contracted to assist. From July 1990 to February 1991, it provided transportation, food, and immediate medical care to the disabled former combatants. It also provided physical rehabilitation and employment counseling as well as designing social reintegration projects. The total cost of the project amounted to US\$2,066,516.

CAII received minimal Government cooperation in finding a suitable site to assist the disabled. The building it was assigned in El Oyate, Chontales Department, was received in deplorable condition; therefore, just before the first disabled ex-combatants arrived, CAII had to equip the center with electricity, drinking water, sanitary facilities, and examining rooms.

Despite these obstacles, CAII assisted 432 patients at El Oyate, 293 disabled veterans and 139 family members, mostly paraplegics, amputees, and others with severe physical disabilities. Another 26 patients were cared for at a temporary center in Puerto Cabezas (RAAN). The poor conditions at El Oyate, especially compared to the medical camps that had been closed when the RN fighters returned from Honduras and Costa Rica, resulted in violent incidents and strikes by the disabled. Still, in El Oyate 84 patients received physical therapy and 134 received orthopedic assistance; 62 received new prostheses and 29 received orthopedic shoes.



Disabled ex-combatants gather to receive new prostheses and other services

The reintegration component provided skills training to assist the disabled to earn a living. CAII organized training workshops on farming, carpentry, auto mechanics, welding, shoemaking, and tailoring. It also provided employment counseling and helped set up microenterprises.

At the close of this project, 51 percent of the patients at El Oyate returned to their communities and rejoined their families, while the remaining 49 percent entered CIAV reintegration projects.

#### Financial Assistance Program

Under the terms of the Managua Protocol, the Government promised a one-time cash payment to ex-combatants. The participants received US\$50 each. In agreements with the Nicaraguan Central Bank and the Nicaraguan Development Bank (BND), CIAV transferred funds for the cash payments to BND branches closest to where the demobilized RN fighters had resettled.

#### Managua-Based Assistance Program

The Managua-based Assistance Program resolved situations that could not be handled in CIAV's regional offices. It included a medical doctor, a social worker, and a paramedic based in Managua who traveled throughout Nicaragua. Between October 1990 and February 1992, CIAV operated a 20-bed medical facility in Managua that provided medical care to 500 patients each month. Patients requiring specialized care were referred to Managua hospitals, where CIAV medical staff visited them and provided instruments and medicines required for treatment.

The Social Services Referral Program assisted demobilized former combatants who wanted information on government pensions, insurance, and other services. CIAV

was the liaison between the demobilized population and government ministries such as Health and Social Services. It also helped family members locate the remains of fallen combatants and provided coffins and transportation for 300 families.

In addition, to ease the shortage of medicine, support maternal-child services, and treat cholera patients in areas where the demobilized RN forces had resettled, CIAV and PAHO distributed medical kits with 38 different drugs. This provided assistance to approximately 20,000 people in 150 communities in remote rural areas.



Medical check-up in CIAV clinic

**CHAPTER III**  
**MONITORING AND VERIFICATION OF SECURITY GUARANTEES TO EX-**  
**COMBATANTS**





## A. SIGNIFICANCE OF MONITORING AND VERIFICATION

Once the initial demobilization had been completed and resettlement was underway, CIAV realized that it would be called upon by the former fighters to monitor and ensure promises by the Government regarding their safety and security. As was said above, this was particularly important because of the fluid nature of so many of the aspects involved in resettling the former Contras in Nicaragua. The losing side in the 1990 election was extremely suspicious of the reintegration of its former foes, while the UNO Government sometimes lacked the capacity to deliver on the security guarantees that had been promised to the former Resistance combatants and their families in a number of formal and informal diplomatic negotiations.



Ceremony commemorating the first anniversary of the signing of the Peace Agreements. Cardinal Obando y Bravo and President Chamorro

This aspect of CIAV's work was entirely consistent with the core provisions of the 1989 Tela Agreement, which provided for monitoring and verifying security guarantees. Monitoring and verification meant that CIAV was simultaneously responsible for the security conditions of former combatants as well as integrating them into civilian life

The wisdom of the Tela Agreement's giving priorities to the disarmament, repatriation, and reintegration of the RN was sometimes used as a pretext by certain Nicaraguan factions to produce negative consequences for CIAV's verification and

monitoring activities. The decision of the Central American presidents to resolve the situation of the Contras first meant that CIAV needed to focus its human and economic resources on the most urgent element of the peace program, the Resistance. Unsurprisingly, some elements accused CIAV of bias when it was doing its job as outlined in the Tela mandate, which was the most logical priority. Had Tela chosen a different mandate and had CIAV attempted to promote peace in Nicaragua without first disarming and reintegrating the Contras, the entire peace process might well have suffered.

The Tela Agreement could not have been specific about the scope of the verification mandate and the mechanisms for its enforcement. Tela was entered into by a Nicaraguan government that was no longer in office by the time the RN returned to the country. The passage of time, the loss of the FSLN Government, and the transition to power of the UNO Government were other variables that made it impossible to predict the conditions that would occur once Resistance fighters returned and reintegrated.

The lack of an agency within the UNO coalition government with the responsibility for implementing demobilization agreements made it much more difficult for demobilized ex-combatants to report violations of their rights and security guarantees. Since some segments of the Nicaraguan public branded ex-members of the RN as Somocistas (followers of the deposed president), the international community, with the noteworthy exception of the OAS, also tended to show little interest in their security. This meant that crimes against them received less international media coverage than similar crimes in other countries. This general indifference sometimes affected or even limited the ability of CIAV to act as a verification mechanism.

CIAV's international verification mission provided the demobilized fighters with a reliable system through which to report violations of their rights and security guarantees. In this sense, monitoring and verification was one of the most significant contributions of CIAV to the peace process. Without CIAV's efforts, rights and security violations would have further encouraged the repatriated Contras to go back on their commitments to peace. Even with CIAV's security and verification, there was enough leakage in delivering on diplomatic assurances regarding security and rights guarantees to encourage rogue elements of the former Resistance to take up arms again and to carry out other steps in protest. As is described below, CIAV played a central role in resolving those issues as well.

In 1992, when the Government called for the formation of the Tripartite Commission to investigate and evaluate such violations, CIAV publicized those that were most flagrant.

## **B. VERIFICATION CONTEXT**

In the former conflict areas where CIAV carried out its monitoring and verification activities, the presence of the central government was often minimal or nonexistent.

Verification was further hindered by the Government's lack of a reintegration strategy and inability to fulfill its promises to the demobilized population.

One major development unforeseen at the start of the Nicaraguan peace process was that the demobilization of former RN combatants was not accompanied by a restructuring of the state security forces (the EPS). This meant that the Resistance was surrendering its weapons and demobilizing its forces while the military structure that had opposed it for nearly a decade remained intact. In electoral defeat, the FSLN, through the security forces, was left with the ability to foment a second front against the increasingly weakened ex-Contras. This disparity of forces was not envisioned during the Tela process and could only be seen in all of its elements after the 1990 election. Certainly, there would have been few reasons for the FSLN Government to promise that it would reduce the size of its forces prior to the election. Moreover, the sudden demobilization of the Contras after the election did not give sufficient time to negotiate a slimming of the EPS and the police.

Soon after the electoral defeat of the Sandinista Government, the FSLN also gave weapons to civilian sympathizers, on the pretext that the social achievements of the revolution would need to be defended in view of the election results and the repatriation of the RN. The failure to downsize the army and police, combined with arming civilians, inevitably produced persistent violations of the rights of the demobilized ex-combatants by Government forces. The military, which had the capacity and the will to resist civilian control, not surprisingly resisted CIAV verification activities as intrusive. Political polarization and land disputes heightened tension in the peace process and led to continuous confrontations.

Predictably, the lack of efficacious conflict-resolution mechanisms where the former combatants had resettled resulted in continual acts of violence. Given the slight government presence, the absence of a judiciary led rural citizens to take justice into their own hands. Armed groups operating with total impunity projected themselves as a government and replaced law-enforcement and judicial representatives. Some members of the EPS and the police took advantage of the situation to violate rights and ignore or reinterpret official orders.

#### Rearmed Groups (Recontras)

The climate described above meant that, by late 1990, groups of demobilized RN members had begun to form small-armed bands that proclaimed themselves to be defending the interests of the former fighters. These groups, known as *recontras*, were scattered throughout Nicaragua and lacked a well-established military organization. Often they were united by family and community ties and by military bonds that had been forged in war.

One year after the inauguration of President Violeta Chamorro (April 1991), CIAV estimated that 13 *recontra* groups with approximately 950 armed men were operating in the northern Nicaragua. By the end of the year, these groups were carrying out major

military operations, including seizures of towns, ambushes of security forces, and attacks on police departments. Late in 1991, the *recontras* operated in Matagalpa and Jinotega departments, the Atlantic Region, the southern and central sections, and the RAAS.

This rearmament took place in a general climate of discontent among former combatants. The *recontras* expressed their discontent by seizing farms and public buildings, holding protest marches, and setting up barricades. Initially these were nonmilitary actions that resulted in former combatants being detained, injured, or killed by security forces.

The first serious armed incident by the *recontras* took place at the end of 1990, when a group took over a major national highway at El Rama (Chontales). At the same time, 200 former combatants and local residents took over the town of Waslala (RAAN). Similar acts took place in the town of Jalapa (Nueva Segovia), Río Blanco (Matagalpa), Corinto Finca (Jinotega), Waslala (RAAN), and Sébaco (Matagalpa). The response of security forces was often uncertain, sometimes leaning toward negotiation and at other times favoring the use of force. The lack of Government negotiators with authority to act or make decisions also aggravated the situation.

#### Perception of Unfulfilled Government Commitments

By late 1990, most former fighters were convinced that the UNO Government was not keeping its pre-demobilization promises and, in some cases, was ignoring them completely. They also felt that it was indifferent to their needs and that the demobilization agreements did not adequately address socioeconomic needs. In early December, the Government and three representatives of the RN formed a commission to review the status of demobilization promises with the CIAV General Coordinator and Cardinal Obando y Bravo as witnesses. The commission did little to change existing perceptions regarding the reintegration process.

#### Land Ownership

Land-ownership difficulties were a major factor contributing to the rearmament of former fighters. Most ex-combatants had been farmers before the war. For this reason, the demobilization accords emphasized land issues. At the start, the Government's development center (poles) program was to be the basic instrument for reintegration. From the standpoint of the demobilized fighters, the program was supposed to give them fertile land, provide technical assistance, and build on-site infrastructure. However, it soon became clear that the approach was both slow and inefficient. In most cases, the Government provided land that lacked clear title. This made it impossible for the former combatants to qualify for bank credit to buy seeds and other inputs.

Conflicting government policies on land titling worsened the disputes. Land grants by regional or departmental governments were precarious and often provoked

illegal occupations. Security conditions deteriorated when violent confrontations erupted between former combatants and Sandinista farmer cooperatives.

### Personal Security

During demobilization negotiations, the Government had made definite assurances on the security rights and guarantees of the demobilized population. It included promising all measures necessary to guarantee their security after demobilization and during the initial reintegration period. The guarantees included demilitarizing conflict areas, collecting weapons from civilians who had been supplied with them to bolster the programs of the Sandinista revolution, and forming a rural police force that would include RN members. When it appeared that the promises were not being delivered, many former fighters said security conditions after demobilization were worse than during the 1980s. For example, they noted a high number of assassinations of Resistance leaders following the demobilization process.

Rearmed groups of former RN members demanded the demilitarization of former conflict zones, including the disarmament of Sandinista civil militias as promised in the Managua Declaration. When the Government did nothing about civilian disarmament, former fighters felt that they had disarmed unilaterally and been left unprotected.

In fulfillment of the demobilization agreements, the Government eventually reduced the army from 96,000 to 28,000. However, while this decision began to solve some thorny problems, it created an additional wave of economic problems. Thousands of demobilized soldiers returned to civilian life and faced the same precarious economic conditions as demobilized RN members.

### Rearmed Groups: Recompas and Revueltos

Soon after the *recontra* groups appeared, Sandinista supporters known as *recompas* began to rearm. They drew support from demobilized soldiers and former members of the Ministry of the Interior security forces. Members of Sandinista cooperatives who had received military training also joined them. When the *recompas* moved into *recontra*-controlled territory, violence broke out.

The claims of the *recompas* were essentially political. They argued that they were merely defending themselves against *recontra* attacks, protecting the Sandinistas' agricultural cooperatives, and defending the achievements of the revolution. Over time these planks of their platform added claims for compensation for services rendered to the FSLN Government during the war. These included land, agricultural bank credits, and reintegration assistance. Like the *recontras*, they believed that the UNO Government was failing to address their requirements.

Parallel economic demands, especially on the land issue, actually united some *recontra* and *recompa* groups. These former enemies were called *revueltos*. They conducted some joint military attacks and demonstrations to pressure the Government

to deliver on demobilization commitments that not been respected. Their collaboration lasted for short periods before they started attacking each other once again.

### C. MONITORING AND VERIFICATION PROGRAM (PSV)

The Tela mandate for the CIAV to monitor activities to integrate former RN combatants into civilian life resulted in the need to open offices to allow them to report violations of security guarantees. Tela also established that the staff of the monitoring offices should visit the demobilized combatants regularly. On July 1, 1993, in response to AG/RES. 1203 (XXII-0/1993) of the General Assembly of the OAS, CIAV expanded its mission to cover all sectors of society that had been affected by war.



CIAV discusses monitoring and verification program with ex-resistance leaders

#### Program Strategy

CIAV's monitoring strategy had three elements: systematic monitoring of former conflict zones; displaying OAS symbols to identify CIAV personnel; and employing Nicaraguan staff alongside the international protection officers. The constant presence of OAS protection officers allowed them to respond rapidly to the needs of the demobilized ex-combatants. CIAV's mobility also encouraged former fighters to report security violations where events had taken place instead of at distant monitoring offices. The protection officers strengthened dialogue between the demobilized ex-combatants and CIAV, helping it to interpret security conditions and evaluate the progress of the reintegration process. A flexible, responsive management style throughout CIAV gave it rapid access to information and made it possible to adapt its work strategy to local needs and respond swiftly to emergencies.

CIAV's practical approach to peace was based on avoiding a massive deployment of international staff members in favor of a strategy of continuous mobility of staff and vehicles. This policy, along with a very careful selection of locations for the assignment of protection officers, an efficient system of communication, and a hierarchy of geographical priorities to monitor, resulted in frequent huge overestimates of CIAV's size and staff by Nicaraguan leaders on all sides.

The PSV had a national director in Managua and, although eight departments in particular were singled out for monitoring, there were only seven international protection officers nationwide. As was usually the case in this cost-effective operation, CIAV avoided a massive deployment of international officers whose sole duty was to monitor security. All international staff pitched in when needed.

One way to show that CIAV was trustworthy and impartial was to hire former Resistance members. CIAV often gained valuable information as its international staff traveled into remote rural areas with former combatants who knew it well. FSLN supporters, of course, tried to inflict a political cost on CIAV because of its hiring policies.

To strengthen its power of persuasion, identify staff, and announce its presence in conflict areas, CIAV displayed OAS symbols conspicuously. Cars, T-shirts, and caps displayed the CIAV acronym--blue on white for cars, white on blue for clothing. The institutional symbols tied the support of the OAS to CIAV and affiliated its staff with the international organization.

The visible symbols also strengthened security for protection officers who traveled throughout conflict areas and former war zones without military escort. From the beginning of CIAV, the General Coordinator made it clear that CIAV cars would not submit to search by official security forces or members of rearmed groups. These and similar measures generated the perception that CIAV protection officers and vehicles enjoyed immunity and inviolability. That permitted CIAV to provide secure transportation to anyone traveling in its cars.

As was noted above, the fact that virtually all CIAV international staff members came from the Western Hemisphere was of unique importance to the ultimate success of its efforts. Had a cohort of observers from outside the hemisphere been deployed on behalf of CIAV, there is little question that cultural or linguistic differences could have proved to be a daunting problem. Moreover, the quality of the CIAV staff, from top to bottom, and its dedication and the professional field performance of CIAV's international and Nicaraguan protection officers gained the respect of the demobilized population immediately. CIAV's effectiveness and cost-consciousness also benefited from the fact that protection officers were civilians. This, and the can-do attitude of CIAV management and staff, made it easy for them to establish close contact with civilian groups. However, in keeping with the need to be scrupulously impartial, PSV officers also maintained solid professional relationships with police and senior army officers.



## Verification and Monitoring Techniques

When CIAV protection officers received a complaint from demobilized fighters or their family members, they checked the facts and circumstances on the ground. This included interviewing victims or family members, local police and judicial authorities, and witnesses. The protection officers then detailed their findings to local authorities and recommended legal and other steps to answer and resolve complaints. In addition, CIAV submitted reports to the ministries of Interior and Foreign Affairs. PSV followed up on these reports and collected statistics on complaints.



CIAV staff aiding in monitoring the peace process

PSV monitored 22 types of violations, most of which were in the Nicaraguan Penal Code: (1) abuse of authority, (2) armed assault, (3) threats of physical harm, (4) deportations, (5) failure to provide medical care, (6) false accusation, (7) homicide, (8) illegal search of homes, (9) illegal detention, (10) illegal land occupation, (11) inflicting injury, (12) incitement to law-breaking, (13) kidnapping, (14) larceny/theft, (15) missing person, (16) possession of illegal weapons, (17) property damage, (18) rape, (19) slander, (20) swindling, (21) threats and harassment, and (22) attempted homicide.

## Monitoring and Verification Program Logistics

The PSV was based on a network of regional offices, efficient use of communications, and a fleet of all-terrain vehicles. Drivers familiar with all sections of Nicaragua and totally dedicated to CIAV were extremely valuable.

Regional offices were set up in the areas with the highest concentration of demobilized ex-combatants. At the outset of the PSV, these were opened in Estelí, Juigalpa, Matagalpa and Puerto Cabezas. Later, the number of regional offices varied a great deal, with a high of nine offices by 1994.

CIAV vehicles were each equipped with HF-UHF radio equipment, allowing OAS field staff to be in constant contact with Managua and CIAV's regional offices. Radio operators in Managua and in the regional offices worked 24 hours a day in three eight-hour shifts. Communication was essential to CIAV in order to preserve its immediate response capability. Protection officers could report events and receive instructions on the spot. Government officials used CIAV's radio system to contact rearmed groups and hostages were able to communicate with members of their families.

The following case illustrates one type of activity under the monitoring and verification program. It was to become one of the most controversial cases ever investigated by CIAV and one of the most widely publicized.

There were numerous cases in which the PSV functioned effectively and efficiently. The case cited below is only one example.

#### The La Marañosa Case

On January 8, 1995, Nicaraguan newspapers reported an armed confrontation between the Sandinista Army (EPS) and a *recontra* group known as Los Mezas between the villages of La Marañosa and Pantasma in Jinotega Department. The incident occurred almost five years after the demobilization of the Resistance began, during which the EPS had substantially professionalized.

CIAV began an immediate investigation.

According to an EPS report, 13 *recontras* and two soldiers died in the battle. Since Los Mezas was known for its criminal activities, local newspapers described the episode as a "Mortal Blow to Criminals" and "Army Hunts Criminals."<sup>4</sup> However, at the time of the firefight Los Mezas had agreed to demobilize and its members were being transported in an EPS truck. It was ambushed on its way to the Apanas EPS base. One of the two dead soldiers had once belonged to the Resistance.

Although there had been more serious incidents in the first phase of demobilization, they were not publicized or as controversial as this case. Since witnesses declared that the members of the Los Mezas were unarmed and traveling in an EPS truck, CIAV requested a government investigation. Local human rights groups began referring to the incident as a massacre, apparently because it was investigated by both the Government and the OAS mission.

When CIAV's report noted inconsistencies in the army investigation ordered by the President of Nicaragua, the EPS responded by emphatically, accusing CIAV of exceeding its mandate and protecting and encouraging rearmed groups. The investigation became one of the tensest times between the army and CIAV.

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<sup>4</sup> *El Nuevo Diario* and *Barricada*, respectively, January 8, 1995.

Following PSV procedures, CIAV visited the scene and discovered spent cartridges and unused bullets at the location from which the shots had allegedly been fired at the army truck. CIAV also found a wire that could have been used to detonate a land mine. Both factors indicated premeditation. CIAV then interviewed neighbors and other witnesses. The OAS mission obtained 17 sworn depositions stating that the Los Mezas victims on the army truck had been unarmed. The depositions also mentioned that an explosion had taken place before the shooting began. Witnesses swore to seeing soldiers take up positions on a hill near La Marañososa earlier that day.

For its part, the EPS claimed that the *recontras* had been armed and drunk when they shot the truck driver and his assistant, forcing the guards to retaliate. However, forensic investigators testified that the shots had come from a distance and from the front of the truck.

CIAV also learned that the army had met with the *recontras* weeks before to obtain their demobilization and had offered cash incentives. This led CIAV staff and other investigators to conclude that the *recontras* from Los Mezas had been on their way to the Apanas EPS base to demobilize.

During the investigations and once they had been reported, CIAV worked closely with the three largest human-rights groups in Nicaragua and with the Human Rights and Peace Committee of the National Assembly. The Attorney General requested and received CIAV assistance to travel to La Marañososa. CIAV also helped the Jinotega public prosecutor to summon witnesses.

When the case was heard in the District Court of Jinotega, the CIAV report was not taken into consideration. While noting the contradictions between the army report and those prepared by the human-rights groups, the Court determined that the soldiers should not stand trial.

#### Other PSV Activities

In addition to verifying the rights and guarantees that had been made to the demobilized population, CIAV examined the problems of internally displaced persons (IDP) and assisted in searching for and identifying people who had disappeared. From January 1995 to June 1996, CIAV monitored IDPs who had been forced to move from their rural homes by continuing violence.

These movements occurred mostly in Matagalpa, Jinotega, and Chontales. Sixty-two percent of the displaced persons left their homes because of the activities of the *recontras*. Others had political motives. Still others left to join rearmed groups. More than one quarter of the displaced population claimed to have been subjected to direct attacks or murders in their families.

At the end of 1991, the Association of Mothers and Family Members of Missing People and Kidnap Victims in Nicaragua (AMFASEDEN) asked CIAV to help identify

and locate 700 people who had disappeared during the war. Assuming that at least some of them had joined the RN, CIAV searched its database on the ex-combatants, using the list of names and information provided by AMFASEDEN. This procedure allowed CIAV to prepare a list of names, matched with personal data. Once the matches had been made, CIAV set up meetings between AMFASEDEN and the people who had been found.

#### D. TRIPARTITE COMMISSION

On October 2, 1992, President Chamorro requested that a Tripartite Commission be established, consisting of Cardinal Obando y Bravo, the CIAV General Coordinator and the Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs. Its objective was to investigate the causes of violence in Nicaragua and recommend to the President the steps that the Government should adopt to solve specific criminal cases and prevent future ones. The Commission was to analyze and review violations of the rights and guarantees of former combatants and other sectors of the population when the alleged perpetrator was a demobilized RN member. After the expansion and modification of CIAV's mandate in 1993 by the OAS General Assembly, the Commission broadened its scope to investigate offenses against all sectors of society.

Working in Managua, the Commission established five regional subcommissions to investigate cases that had been assigned to them and to report their findings. The Commission eventually submitted 181 recommendations in four progress reports. However, it lacked enforcement powers.

The Commission classified Government actions on the recommendations contained in its reports as implemented, partly implemented, or not implemented. In its first three progress reports, the Commission considered 50 cases and identified 211 perpetrators or accomplices. According to Commission records, Government security forces were involved in 66 percent of the cases and 53 percent of the alleged perpetrators were security officers. By July 1995, only one person had served a jail sentence as a result of government actions in pursuance to Commission recommendations. When the Commission was dissolved there were 33 cases in its fourth report that had not received follow-up.

During the Commission's final meeting in October 1996, it found that, because it could not hold officials responsible for rights violations, the administration of justice was seriously undermined. The Commission noted obstructions to the carrying out of recommendations: too few judges and prosecutors in rural areas, no guarantee that civilian witnesses would appear in court, failure of police to arrest suspects, and a lack of zeal in the Attorney General's office.

Although the Government incompletely implemented the Commission's recommendations, its moral clout was considerable and violations of the rights and guarantees of former combatants decreased significantly in 1993 as compared to 1992.

The Commission's work was entirely consistent with CIAV's Tela mandate and assisted in creating a climate of at least some sensitivity to these important issues.

Its December 1993 report, "Basis for the Reform of the Nicaraguan Military Penal Code," recommended that crimes committed by the security forces against civilians be prosecuted in civilian courts. The findings were taken into account in 1994 when the National Assembly enacted a Military Penal Code.

Three examples of the Tripartite Commission's investigations are discussed below.

### The Waslala Case

On October 2, 1990, a group of Sandinista sympathizers seized the Waslala city hall and several other government buildings. Four ex-RN combatants were killed. During its field investigation, a subcommittee of the Tripartite Commission established that armed FSLN supporters had taken over city hall, the National Bank building, the offices of the Education Ministry, and the local hospital, and had captured the mayor and the Government representative. Police had not interfered.

In response to the takeover, civilians, who were mostly UNO supporters and former Resistance fighters, ejected the occupiers from the buildings and blocked road access to Waslala. In the melee, two minors suffered gunshot wounds as they came out of the house of a local Sandinista supporter, according to the report. Although the police arrested the gunman, they released him a few hours later.

On the next day, 300 people carrying stones, machetes, and possibly some rifles and pistols went to the police station to demand the replacement of the existing police by a rural police force made up of former RN members, as provided for in demobilization agreements. Although the chief of police explicitly ordered his officers not to shoot at the crowd, some of them did. The crowd then returned fire, and when the shootout was over, four protesters lay dead and seven had been wounded. All of the dead men were former members of the Resistance.

The police report on the events, prepared by the Deputy Chief of Police for Matagalpa, Roberto González Kraudy, stated that only the former Contras had committed crimes. The report did not mention the takeover of buildings by Sandinista sympathizers. A military court acquitted the 11 officers who had shot at the crowd.

After analyzing the incident, the Tripartite Commission ascertained a clear political motive for the crimes, noting that "the political polarization resulting from the war, the animosity between the opposing groups, and biased police behavior generated the events." The report recommended reopening the Waslala case and investigating Deputy Chief González Kraudy for a cover-up. It also recommended dismissing the officers who had fired on the crowd in violation of their explicit orders and disarming all civilians in the region.

### The Heliodoro Splinger Varela Case

In December 1991, Heliodoro Splinger Varela, a demobilized member of the Resistance, was serving as the police chief of Wiwilí, Jinotega department. When he learned that a *recompa* had seized the neighboring town of Wamblán on December 20, he decided that he had to meet with them. He requested that the heads of the EPS battalion in Wiwilí accompany him, but the officer said he did not have enough fuel to transport his troops. Mr. Splinger Varela then traveled to Wamblán with 20 police officers.

On his arrival, Mr. Splinger Varela met with the *recompas*, who lured him and Police Officer Julio C. Benavides away from the other police. They then murdered Mr. Splinger Varela and wounded Officer Benavides, who nevertheless escaped. The remaining policemen were taken hostage and held in the police station.

According to the Tripartite Commission report on the incident, “senior army and police officers of Region VI, Red Cross personnel, and mission [CIAV] staff observed the open relationship between army personnel and the *recompa* group at the site.” A police investigation conducted 10 months after the event determined that police had been negligent. According to a statement by the Interior Ministry representative in the region, cited in a report, the killers had been seen soon after the event at the Region VI police station.

In its report, the Tripartite Commission verified that there was a political motive for the crime, aggravated by the relationship between army personnel and the *recompas*. It recommended the arrest and prosecution of three persons identified by Officer Benavides. It also recommended that the senior army and police officers of Region VI be investigated for negligence and a cover-up.

### The Unión Labú Case

In November 1993, several members of the Sandinista cooperative Unión Labú in Siuna (RAAN) were killed by *recontras*. During its investigation, the Tripartite Commission established that the *recontras* had held them in a local church and had killed four of them. The *recontras* ransacked a store and homes of co-op members. The Commission established that the police had claimed to investigate the case and identified two of the alleged killers, even though it had never visited the crime scene. The Commission report said there was a political motive and recommended the arrest and prosecution of the alleged killers.

## E. CONFLICT MEDIATION

Because of the need to ensure that the security promises made to the demobilized Contras were scrupulously respected and compensate for the weakness or possible bias of the police and army, it was essential that CIAV develop an effective conflict amelioration or mediation capability. The Tela mandate, as has been said,

could not have anticipated the victory of the UNO coalition in the 1990 elections; at its signing, the FSLN Government had every reason to believe that it would control the peace process. However, the Sandinista history of centralizing government services and the difficulty for the UNO Government of establishing a working presence in remote areas left a gap that CIAV had to fill.

Reality dictated that CIAV begin its role as mediator as soon as it arrived in Nicaragua. It was involved in the demobilization and repatriation negotiations. This role continued and became important to the operational success of the peace process throughout CIAV's monitoring and verification activities. As early as the pre-demobilization negotiations between the RN and the Government, CIAV was both a mediator and a facilitator.

CIAV's investigation into the violation of security and other guarantees to ex-combatants were the vital first step that began negotiations with the security forces. CIAV gained the respect and trust of former combatants and became the natural mediator between them and the Government. On many occasions the Government asked CIAV to mediate armed clashes between security forces and demobilized RN forces. It was also asked to help clear up group and individual conflicts such as land disputes and kidnappings.



CIAV, ex-combatants, and Government officials assist in mediating conflict

CIAV's negotiating efforts never seemed to end. Just when the repatriation and resettlement issues seemed to be coming under control, CIAV had to step up its interposition and good-offices efforts on security guarantees and the rights of the former combatants. Even before that phase of its programs had been completed, CIAV was transformed into the negotiator between the Government and rearmed groups, one of its most important accomplishments.

## Trust and Prestige

CIAV's constant presence in former war zones earned it the trust and respect of the demobilized RN fighters and its ability to deploy human and logistical resources in conflict areas quickly and effectively resulted in a high level of prestige. The demobilized population perceived CIAV as an efficient and professional field-oriented organization. Officials also recognized CIAV as an important information source on the conditions in former conflict zones. This meant the Government could rely on CIAV to mediate regional armed conflicts between the *recontras* and the army. For example, the Government negotiators desired that CIAV should nudge rearmed groups to de-emphasize political demands in favor of a social and economic emphasis. Soon, the *recompas* also requested CIAV to mediate between themselves and the Government.

## Negotiating Procedures

Consistent with OAS policy, CIAV operated under a rule that it could mediate only when asked by the Government. This important emphasis meant that, unlike in some other international peace missions, the monitoring and verification body did not become the advocate of the anti-government side. In some ways, this may have made CIAV's position more difficult, because it involved an active role for the Government. However, it was also a great strength, because CIAV and all the different parties and groups knew that the Government had specifically requested its good offices. As with so many other aspects of CIAV, there was no manual or rigid set of rules that stifled flexibility and innovation in conflict management. As a result, in real-life situations, particularly those in which CIAV was physically closer to a difference of opinion than Government representatives, it had to establish contact with the groups in the field before receiving a formal Government request.

CIAV's mediation objective was always to lower levels of hostility. Sometimes this required negotiating cease-fires or hostage releases, or setting up safe negotiating areas. It also assisted the sides in a conflict to draft viable negotiating agendas and positions.

For example, in the case of hostage-taking or armed clashes, CIAV had to:

- Form a CIAV negotiating team; facilitate and mediate negotiations;
- Establish a communications channel between captors, intermediaries, or rearmed groups and radio communications between CIAV staff at the conflict site and headquarters in Managua or its nearest regional office;
- In the case of a hostage situation, insist on seeing the hostages and providing them with emergency medical assistance; call for their release, whether or not demands are met;
- Ensure that negotiation sites were selected by mutual agreement;



- Establish effective security procedures, such as requesting the removal of armed fighters or security forces from conflict zones;
- Analyze demands, motives, and possible solutions and outcomes; and
- Communicate demands to Government negotiators;

In most cases, hostages were freed in a short time. Often, the mere presence of a CIAV protection officer and a discussion with the kidnappers resulted in their immediate release.

CIAV provided security to all negotiators during and immediately after negotiations. The trust reposed in CIAV by the rearmed groups was crucial to their willingness to travel unarmed in CIAV vehicles, especially to places they did not control. CIAV also provided safe transportation to government negotiators. One protection officer was assigned to be with hostages around the clock during negotiations.



Comandante "Indomable" makes point during negotiations with Church, community leaders, and CIAV

In keeping with its general approach, CIAV and its international protection officers encouraged active participation by Nicaraguan nongovernmental organizations, religious groups, and/or well-known local personalities. This approach helped generate trust between different sectors of society that often enabled CIAV to restart stalled negotiations. Its familiarity with all the details of a negotiation, both public and private, made CIAV an invaluable interlocutor during implementation and follow-up of agreements.

Frequently, agreements between the Government and rearmed groups created verification commissions to ensure implementation, in which CIAV often participated. When the Government designated an office in the Ministry of the Interior to carry out an agreement, CIAV monitored its actions and reported regularly to the Ministry.

## F. DISARMAMENT

Between 1991 and 1997, CIAV served as mediator, facilitator, and guarantor during three disarmament periods.



*Recontras* arrive to begin the disarmament and demobilization process

### 1991–1992 Disarmament Process

On May 21, 1991, leaders of the early *recontras* asked CIAV to contact the Government on their behalf to discuss their possible demobilization. As a condition, they demanded the removal of army and police forces from their areas and the disarmament of Sandinista cooperatives. CIAV made its good offices available and ultimately, with government approval, helped arrive at a cease-fire and formed an official negotiating team acceptable to all.



Members of special disarmament brigades collect weapons for destruction

A month later, CIAV brought the Government and the *recontras* together for the first time to discuss demobilization. The formation of *recompa* groups in August 1991 and their clashes with *recontras* delayed negotiations. The *recompa* leaders asked CIAV to set up meetings for them with *recontra* leaders and the Government. In early 1992, agreements were signed with 33 *recontra* and *recompa* groups that resulted in their disarming.

### Special Disarmament Brigades (BED)

As was said above, at the outset of the repatriation and reintegration process for the Contras, troops under United Nations command served briefly to collect weapons and uniforms from Resistance fighters. CIAV began the process of demobilizing the RN fighters and reintegrating them into civilian life.

However, the emergence of rearmed groups presented a challenge that was met by the formation of Nicaraguan Special Disarmament Brigades (BED), composed of former EPS officers and demobilized Resistance leaders, who collected and destroyed the weapons that had been surrendered. The BED had been created with the sole purpose of collecting and destroying weapons. This mechanism allowed the CIAV mission to maintain its completely civilian nature and to take up its reintegration duties as soon as weapons had been collected.

The agreements with rearmed groups dealt mostly with security issues. Incentives were offered to both leaders and troops. According to some Government estimates, between 1990 and 1993 the Government spent US\$1.3 million on disarmament activities. A large proportion was for the cash-for-guns programs.<sup>5</sup> The gun buy-back program proved both costly and ineffective. Some groups were formed

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<sup>5</sup> Angel Saldomando and Elvira Cuadra, Los problemas de la pacificación en Nicaragua: Reconstrucción de grupos armados y conflictos sociales, Managua, CRIES, 1994.

solely to exchange weapons for cash. Some disarmed and rearmed more than once. By the time the Government ended this program, it had collected 20,000 weapons.



Destruction of weapons

The incentives provided to leaders of rearmed groups, such as cars, cash payments, farms, and houses, led to internal disagreements between the former combatants and ended up by eroding the legitimacy of the leaders of the rearmed groups, many of whom were forced to move and abandon the areas where the demobilized population lived. The 1991-1992 disarmament agreements temporarily appeased the ex-combatants, but core issues related to their permanent reintegration were not resolved. As a result, new *recontra* groups were formed, such as Frente Norte 3-80.

#### The Disarmament of Frente Norte 3-80 (1994)

Frente Norte 3-80 (FN 3-80) was a rearmed group established in mid-1992 by 13 former RN members. It became the best-known and most influential *recontra* group. It had great popular support among the campesinos of Nueva Segovia and conducted impressive military operations. FN 3-80's reputation and influence was due to the style and statements of its leader, *El Chacal* (José Angel Talavera). In sharp contrast to earlier demobilization, FN 3-80 emphasized reintegration guarantees. This permitted it to subordinate disarmament to the delivery of government promises to help its members to reintegrate into civilian life.

#### The El Zúngano Crisis

The crisis in El Zúngano and the ripple effect of retaliation provides a clear illustration of the kind of layered negotiations and interventions that was a common

challenge to CIAV. The incident, demands, and counter-demands all required CIAV to juggle contradictory priorities in a potential life-and-death situation, acting as mediator and advocate to bring about the peaceful settlement of the kind of complicated “real world” situation that occurs in many peace missions. The resolution of these matters was proof of CIAV’s effectiveness. It is also important to note that CIAV had been in the field for more than three years when the incidents occurred and that they broke out just a few months after the OAS General Assembly had modified the CIAV mission mandate to include all segments of Nicaraguan society.

On August 19, 1993, FN 3-80 took a 41-member Government delegation hostage in El Zúngano, Quilalí (Nueva Segovia). The group included three National Assembly members (two from the FSLN and one from the Independent Liberal Party), the two highest-ranking BED officers, the Vice-Ministers of Labor and Social Action, and other Government officials. The *recontras* demanded the resignation of the Minister of the Presidency, Antonio Lacayo, Army Commander Humberto Ortega, and the chief of the army intelligence bureau, Col. Lenín Cerna. The kidnappers also demanded financial and technical assistance for the demobilized forces, social assistance programs, and the fulfillment of UNO campaign promises

On the following day, the Government requested that CIAV serve as the sole mediator and also provide humanitarian and medical assistance to the hostages. CIAV staff in Quilalí immediately went to El Zúngano to check the status of the hostages. At the same time, CIAV’s General Coordinator and protection officers, including a physician, traveled from Managua to El Zúngano to meet with FN 3-80 leaders.

In response to the El Zúngano kidnapping, a rearmed pro-FSLN group, *Comando Dignidad*, led by Comandante 31 (Donald Mendoza), a former EPS officer, stormed UNO’s Managua headquarters on August 20 and took 38 hostages, including the Vice President of Nicaragua and two National Assembly members.

For her part, President Chamorro requested that CIAV obtain the immediate and simultaneous release of the Managua and El Zúngano hostages. CIAV staff met with Mendoza, provided medical and humanitarian assistance to the hostages, and established a radio link between the hostages and their families.

To promote contacts between the armed group and the Government, CIAV staff set up two negotiating teams, including Government officials, FSLN representatives, all Nicaraguan human-rights groups, Cardinal Obando y Bravo, and local political figures. CIAV also protected both the negotiators and the hostages, and furnished transportation and communications assistance to the negotiators. The work of these negotiators resulted in the release of some of the hostages.

#### Caulatú Agreements

On August 25, after exhausting, tense negotiations, the Government and Frente Norte 3-80 signed the first Caulatú Agreement, which led to the release of the remaining

hostages in El Zúngano. *Comando Dignidad* released its hostages the same day. The agreement, known as Cautatú I, also resulted in the demilitarization of the conflict zone and a 60-day cease-fire. In addition, it set up a security area in which FN 3-80 assembled its troops.

Following Cautatú I, however, serious armed skirmishes continued. These included FN 3-80's kidnapping of two French diplomats on September 23, allegedly as a response to threats by an army spokesman. At the request of the Government, CIAV negotiated the release of the hostages.

A new meeting between the Government and FN 3-80 on October 1 failed because there was no agreement on a demobilization date. The *recontras* conditioned their partial demobilization on the fulfillment of Government promises on reintegration assistance. Two days later, General Humberto Ortega declared FN 3-80 outlaws and suspended their security guarantees. In response, FN 3-80 suspended negotiations and significantly increased its military activities.

On February 24, 1994, CIAV brokered an agreement known as Cautatú II, for demobilization on a timetable tied to a detailed Government reintegration program and the incorporation of demobilized combatants into the National Police. CIAV and civil-society groups managed the disarmament of the Frente Norte 3-80 troops.

#### Disarmament in 1996 and 1997

Following the election of the Alemán Government, CIAV assisted in the disarmament of 600 rearmed fighters, most of whom had not participated in earlier disarmaments. Some had rearmed at least once. In contrast to the experience with FN 3-80, these rogue groups tended to have poorly defined political agendas. Besides providing protection and logistical support to negotiators, CIAV facilitated and witnessed disarmament accords for a selective amnesty.

As is discussed below, CIAV-sponsored Peace and Justice Commissions were important during this disarmament period. Commission members established channels of communication between the Government and irregular forces and deterred community violence.



CHAPTER IV  
**REINTEGRATION INTO CIVILIAN SOCIETY**





## A. REINTEGRATION POLICY

From the beginning of the demobilization process in 1990, CIAV lived in close contact with the former RN combatants. The OAS mission quickly realized that the RN consisted of poor campesinos that averaged 25 years old. The former combatants were short on work qualifications, poorly educated. CIAV data indicated that 84 percent had completed only three years of primary school, 71 percent had been farmers before joining the RN, 70 percent wanted to return to farming, and 24 percent owned farmland.

The general outlines of CIAV's post-1993 reintegration programs had been largely established during the first three years. However, in CIAV's second phase, a much greater emphasis was placed on reintegration projects for community strengthening. As has been noted, the focus was on all elements of Nicaraguan society, rather than, as was essential at first, on the Contras. After 1993, there was a greater emphasis on civil-society groups and assistance to FN 3-80. The goal was a wide range of humanitarian and social programs that were intended to upgrade the lives of citizens.

Living conditions in Nicaragua, which had been depressed for decades, were in need of thorough assistance programs. Much of the country lacked access to drinking water at home. Health facilities were scarce nationwide, schools were dilapidated, illiteracy and dropout rates were high, student performance was low, and teachers were poorly trained. Roads were poor, contributing to the isolation of rural communities.



Completed CIAV self-construction housing project in San Rafael del Norte (Nueva Segovia)

Land disputes further aggravated Nicaragua's poverty. Much land had been seized from owners at the beginning of the FSLN government in 1979. The armed conflict further confused land ownership and clouded the title to land. As a result, although the Government had promised land to the ex-combatants, that promise proved hard to keep. Disputes involved former Resistance fighters, discharged army personnel, supporters of the Sandinista land redistribution, and the original owners. CENPAP estimated that the ex-combatants would require 1,000,000 *manzanas*<sup>6</sup> to reintegrate into productive civilian life. By 1992 it had assigned only one third of that acreage. Much of that land was unsuitable for farming or improperly titled. Invasions and confrontations over land issues were common. Between 1990 and 1995, 40 percent of Nicaraguans were involved in land disputes, many of which were violent.

## B. REINTEGRATION PROGRAMS

CIAV based its reintegration programs (housing, farming, and income-generating activities) on the lessons that had been learned during its humanitarian assistance programs. These programs trained former combatants and members of rearmed groups in community-based decision-making and management, encouraged active participation by participants, advanced infrastructure, strengthened community organizations, and identified local leaders.

### Housing Program

CIAV's housing program sought to address urgent need and have a long-term impact. Its objectives included:

- To provide suitable housing to the demobilized and their families;
- To foster the principle of self-sufficiency and train ex-combatants in construction;
- To promote reintegration into productive civilian life; and
- To promote microenterprise in building materials.

Between 1991 and 1997, CIAV assisted in the construction of 2,062 houses in 59 communities for approximately 12,400 people. It emphasized participatory work methods and supplied building materials, tools, technical assistance, and logistical support. None of the houses were assigned to specific families until all were finished. The local and municipal governments provided the land. Most houses were built in former conflict areas where most ex-combatants had resettled. Initially, CIAV targeted the most needy of the demobilized population, particularly the disabled. When former combatants had land, CIAV provided construction materials and technical assistance.

The program had two phases: the Self-Help Housing Construction Project (PAV), and the Productive Housing Project (CHAP). The main objective was to provide housing for demobilized former combatants. CHAP also included an income-generating component: crop production, livestock farming, and small and microenterprise

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<sup>6</sup> In Nicaragua 1 manzana = 0.64 hectares.

development. In addition, CHAP built infrastructure such as schools (47), community centers (12), health clinics (15), and repaired roads and bridges.

#### Self-Help Housing Construction Project (PAV)

During this project (April 1991 to September 1992), CIAV helped build 1,269 houses in 41 communities. The demobilized population was consulted about home sites, as were local governments. Regional leaders of the former RN helped to identify participants. CIAV assigned a professional foreman and skilled tradesmen to each site. Ultimately this system trained 1,017 ex-fighters in carpentry and masonry. In addition, CIAV provided materials such as zinc, nails, and cement, and construction tools. Participants provided local wood, gravel, and sand. CIAV architects and engineers provided technical assistance at each construction site.

In cooperation with the School of Architecture of the National Engineering University, CIAV designed three model houses: (1) the L-27 was a 27 m<sup>2</sup>, L-shaped house with cement walls halfway up and wood above, (2) the FA-CIAV house had the same type of walls, but was 27 to 29 m<sup>2</sup> and square, and (3) the Coastal model, designed specifically for the North Atlantic, was constructed of wood, 36 m<sup>2</sup>, and raised on stilts. All the houses had zinc roofs.



Former combatants construct homes for themselves and their families in the Atlantic Coast region

To generate income and employment, CIAV assisted in establishing 17 microenterprises to produce building materials.<sup>7</sup> It provided management and technical training, including the equipment and machinery for start-up, and agreed to buy the materials. The impact of this approach was evident immediately. For example, in its

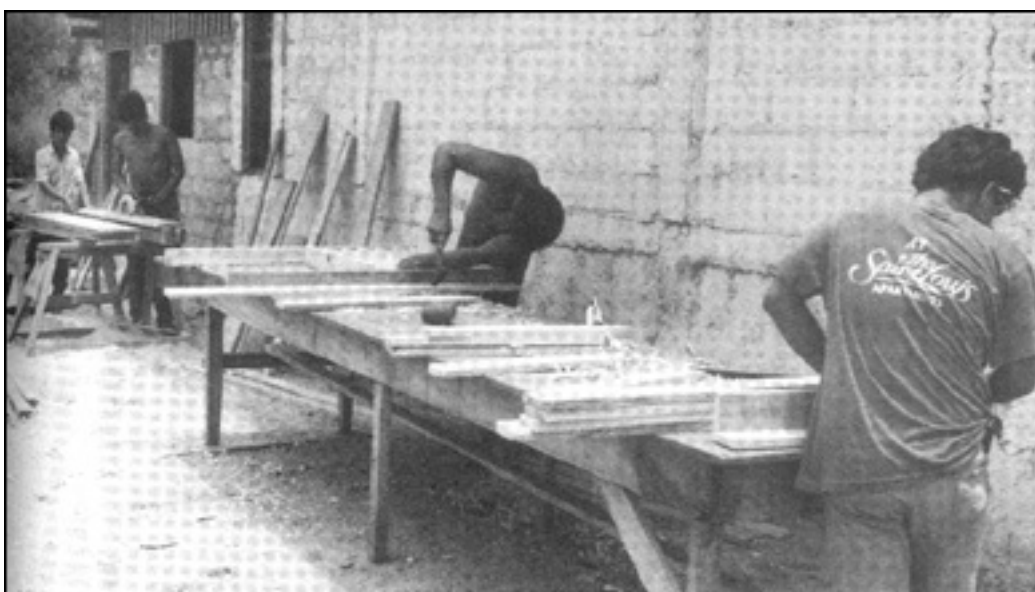
<sup>7</sup> 5 quarries, 5 sawmills, 3 block factories, 3 brick factories, and 1 latrine factory.

first three months, sales from one block factory totaled US \$375,000 and generated 200 jobs.

### Income-Generating Housing Project (CHAP)

CIAV implemented CHAP from October 1992 to June 1997. This project assisted in constructing 793 houses in 21 communities, drawing on lessons from the PAV. The two projects shared objectives and used participatory work methods.

CHAP had three new components: sanitation (latrines and water), infrastructure (schools, community halls, and/or health clinics), and varied microenterprises to promote self-support and solid work habits. The microenterprises ranged from family vegetable gardens and livestock farming to carpentry and auto-mechanic shops. CIAV conducted feasibility studies and provided training, depending on community and family needs.



Teaching woodworking for housing project

CIAV believed that the former fighters and their families had to become full members of their communities, participating in activities and finding solutions to community needs. CHAP exhibited five noteworthy characteristics.

*Municipal government participation.* In CHAP, CIAV sought to encourage the active participation of municipal governments to identify and assess community needs and solve problems. Local governments in collaboration with the Nicaraguan Municipal Development Agency (INIFOM), grassroots groups, and CIAV chose housing sites. In several cases, INIFOM bought land from private owners for participants.

*Collective selection of participants.* Unlike PAV, community members chose CHAP participants. First, CIAV prepared a list of potential candidates, including those who had

not been in the RN and those most in need. This was presented to community leaders, and, after consultations, a final list of participants was drawn by lot.

*Collective selection of architectural designs.* House plans were chosen with the advice of the participants. CIAV presented possible designs that had been prepared by the School of Architecture and requested comments. If changes that participants proposed were feasible within the project timeline, budget, and objectives, CIAV adopted them.



Giving possession of a housing unit to an ex-combatant

*Use of regional construction materials.* CIAV encouraged the use of local materials. This approach benefited those who produced them (including microenterprises managed by former combatants and other local producers) and created jobs. Having a practical, local procurement system reduced transportation costs. This also eased the burden on CIAV's purchasing department in Managua.



Use of local materials in CIAV housing projects

*Environmental protection.* To reduce deforestation, CHAP included an environmental component that called for tree planting and environmental protection.

### Agricultural Projects

The farming projects conducted from 1992 to 1997 continued agricultural activities that had begun immediately after demobilization. However, long droughts and the lack of bank credits slowed the implementation of the early projects. Later projects allowed participants and their families to earn a living, limited migration to cities, and made use of comparative advantages of each region. The emphasis on comparative advantage encouraged traditional and non-traditional products that had commercial potential. In selecting possible projects, CIAV considered the needs of the former fighters, their location and skills, topographical factors, and weather conditions. Farming projects were carried out in two stages: Agricultural Impact Projects (March 1992 to June 1993) and Income-Generating Assistance Projects (June 1993 to June 1997).

### Agricultural Impact Projects

From June 1993 to June 1997, CIAV provided agricultural training and technical assistance through Agricultural Impact Projects. For example, CIAV offered workshops on environmental protection with the Ministry of Natural Resources, training on how to construct silos with the Swiss Cooperation Agency for Development, and workshops on farm issues with the Ministry of Agriculture and the National School of Agriculture, and began 30 tree nurseries with the UN World Food Program and the Ministry of Natural Resources.

Specific projects were intended to increase production and marketing of traditional and non-traditional crops for domestic and international markets. Seeds and tools for basic grains, vegetables, and fruit were distributed to 15,032 families. In addition to traditional crops, the demobilized population was also encouraged to grow non-traditional products such as black beans and tabasco chili peppers for export. During this program, vegetables and chilies valued at more than US\$320,000 were sold.

CIAV also opened model farms (training and experimental centers) in Boaco, Estelí, Madriz, and Jinotega departments. These provided agricultural and related training and technical assistance, distributed seeds and tools, and undertook pilot projects to acquaint the ex-combatants with non-traditional products with export potential. These centers also reintroduced crops that had disappeared during the armed conflict and demonstrated the commercial potential for new crops. Technical assistance aimed to modernize farming techniques that had kept the ex-combatants at the subsistence level. CIAV also emphasized soil conservation, irrigation, and modern planting techniques.

#### Income-Generating Assistance Projects

The extremely depressed Nicaraguan economy to which the former combatants returned meant that there was an urgent need for CIAV to create jobs and generate family incomes in order for its reintegration projects to succeed.

The goal of the Atlantic Coast Rice Distribution Project was to restore rice growing. USAID and CIAV cooperated with government and non-governmental organizations, including some religious groups. USAID provided US\$1,000,000. This project assisted 15,000 families in 200 communities, first by distributing 100 pounds of rice seed and farming tools in April and May 1991. CIAV and USAID toured the Atlantic Coast region and helped choose participants. The distribution schedule and locations were announced by radio and in town meetings.

The Atlantic Coast Marketing Project was related to the previous project because its aim was to help rice farmers to get a market price for their crops. CIAV worked with four groups from YATAMA who had founded a rice-marketing co-operative in Waspan, Kum, and La Esperanza, in the River Coco area (RAAN). The group in Waspan was responsible for marketing rice in the region. CIAV installed a rice silo with drying capacity and three warehouses in each town. The silos allowed the co-op to hold its rice past the harvest to earn higher prices. CIAV also installed three electricity-generating plants for each silo and warehouse, which were built close to threshers supplied by the European Union. Co-op members learned basic marketing skills and silo operation and maintenance. CIAV built two river barges to transport rice to Waspan and provided the Waspan co-op with a pickup, three humidity testers, and a computer.



### Rehabilitation Program for Disabled War Combatants

CIAV designed a two-part program to assist disabled war combatants. The Medical-Surgical Program provided medical care to disabled veterans after the Immediate Assistance Program. Care was provided through the PADF from April to September 1991 and by CIAV until March 1992. This phase of the program assisted 1,132 patients. The program operated from a medical center in Condega and a hospital in La Trinidad, both in Estelí department. CIAV divided the activities into patient identification, medical and pre- and post-surgical attention, and surgery.

Two mobile medical teams screened patients and took them to the 80-bed Condega medical center where PADF gave basic care and prepared clinical reports. Patients needing additional care were transferred to La Trinidad. Under an agreement with the hospital directors, PADF and CIAV upgraded hospital capabilities and equipment in return for specialized care. CIAV also supplemented physicians' fees and provided medical specialists. The hospital provided services such as general and reconstructive surgery, orthopedics, traumatology, urology, internal medicine, and emergency care.

CIAV also collaborated with specialized hospitals in Managua where former combatants could receive cancer, neurosurgical, ophthalmological, and other treatments. The OAS mission also provided instruments and medicines to Managua hospitals that were used by disabled ex-combatants. To treat patients who could not be served in either La Trinidad or Managua hospitals, CIAV operated its own 20-bed clinic in Managua.

### Reintegration Program for Disabled Former Combatants

As was the case with farming programs, CIAV's rehabilitation program also had a job-training component that was implemented by Creative Associates International, Inc. (CAII). This was similar to the CAII program under the Immediate Assistance project. CAII trained ex-fighters in agriculture, carpentry, driving, electrical work, auto mechanics, and simple veterinary medicine, and also conducted a literacy program. It ran self-help housing projects in Juigalpa, Quilalí, Jinotega, and RAAN, and organized microenterprises that included a bakery in Estelí; a car-repair shop in Matagalpa; an industrial-arts workshop in Jinotega; carpentry, tailor, and shoe-repair shops in Juigalpa; and a farm in Masapia that trained oxen for plowing. From an office in Puerto Cabezas, it also provided medical follow-up and income-generating projects for disabled Miskitos.

### Social Support Group

CIAV established a Social Support Group in November 1992 to instill community spirit and promote full participation in projects. The goal was to work with the community and especially women to identify, assess, and solve social needs and problems of the former combatants and their families. The group devoted special attention to families. By having an active role in CIAV housing projects, the group promoted participatory work

methods, expedited the selection of project participants, and organized work crews and community activities, such as food programs for children, community kitchens, and family vegetable gardens.

The Social Support Group also encouraged women to be involved in decision-making about housing design and the construction of health clinics, schools, and community halls, and income-generating and environmental projects. It held workshops and seminars on local issues, promoted initiatives, and identified and trained community leaders, especially on human rights, the rights of women and children, and environmental protection. It also improved communications of the demobilized population with government agencies and NGOs on topics such as health, education, housing, pensions, environment, and government services.

### Special Reintegration Projects

CIAV sponsored local reconciliation initiatives to promote reintegration and the peace process in former conflict zones. These projects were sometimes intended to help war widows and children. There were also projects to alleviate the effects of natural disasters.

#### *Waslala Mothers and Widows Project*

In 1993, the Waslala Association of Mothers and Widows of Fallen Resistance and EPS Combatants asked for CIAV support to build 52 houses on land donated by INIFOM. CIAV taught the women how to build houses, using the work methods that had proved successful before. The project used plans they had adopted. To cut costs, CIAV trained the women to use local materials, especially sand and gravel from local rivers. The use of wood was kept to a minimum to protect the environment.

The Social Support Group organized work crews and made assignments on that basis. CIAV set up a day-care center run by elderly or pregnant women. The CIAV staff held seminars on human rights, rights of children and women, civic participation, basic medical care, and food hygiene. The Group arranged with the Health Ministry for a medical-care system for its members and their children. MARENA contributed trees and WFP provided food during the construction period.

#### *Las Noras*

CIAV also conducted a project for 137 women, most of whom had retired from the EPS or were internally displaced FSLN supporters. The women had formed an association named for Nora Astorga, a former Sandinista leader who had been Nicaragua's ambassador to the UN. CIAV provided technical assistance, using CHAP methods to assist this group. To ensure that finish construction would be completed before the rainy season, CIAV provided some construction materials and transported the women to construction sites. The Social Support Group helped the members contact the WFP, which provided food during the construction period. Representatives

of the Government of the United Kingdom assisted the Nora Astorga group by funding sanitation systems and holding environment workshops.

### *Malpaisillo and El Tránsito*

The Malpaisillo housing project was intended for those affected by the 1992 eruption of the Cerro Negro volcano. To reduce construction costs, CIAV engineers taught the villagers how to make building blocks from volcanic rock. CIAV carried out a reforestation program in cooperation with MARENA. Before and during the eruption, CIAV cooperated with the EPS to evacuate residents near the volcano.

CIAV also helped people who had been affected by the 1992 Pacific Coast tidal wave that destroyed the fishing village of El Tránsito. Survivors had lost their homes, fishing boats, and equipment and were no longer able to support themselves. With USAID funding, CIAV built a refrigeration plant, paid for boat repairs, and distributed fishing equipment to 110 heads of household.

## **C. REINTEGRATION OF FRENTE NORTE 3-80**

As was said above, the Caulatú II Accord (February 24, 1994) resulted in the demobilization of FN 3-80. It set a demobilization timetable and made security promises to the group. It also demilitarized the area and addressed reintegration assistance. The Government and FN 3-80 met regularly. This resulted in a series of reintegration projects that proved to be the most comprehensive of the entire Nicaraguan peace process.

In return for FN 3-80's demobilization, the Government agreed to recognize it as a legal entity, provide immediate and transitional assistance including clothing and 1,000 cordobas for each member of the demobilized rearmed group, offer FN 3-80 members positions in the National Police, grant land with clear title, provide construction materials, build houses, approve bank credits, and provide training in specified skill areas.

The successful reintegration of FN 3-80 resulted from competent group leadership, a specific demobilization timetable, and the group's willingness to include non-members of the RN in the reintegration process. FN 3-80 leaders played a decisive role in the specific elements of the reintegration agenda, demonstrated their clear understanding of the needs of its members, and did not request the traditional incentives that had been offered to rearmed leaders.

FN 3-80 leaders conditioned their demobilization schedule on the Government's timely fulfillment of its promises. The two parties to the agreement established an agency to monitor the agreement that was headed by the leader of FN 3-80.

The reintegration program for FN 3-80 included not only its supporters but also members of the police and former EPS army personnel. FN 3-80 permitted this

collaboration and joint benefits because they believed that their former opponents and non-combatants had suffered many of the same setbacks as a result of the war. This included the fact that they were living in the same social, economic, and political conditions.

As was mentioned above, CIAV played a decisive role in disarmament negotiations before *Caulatú II* was signed, and then acted as guarantor. Along with FN 3-80 leaders and government representatives, it designed a comprehensive reintegration plan.

### CONOR 3-80 Cooperative

After demobilizing and receiving legal status, FN 3-80 formed the CONOR 3-80 Cooperative as part of the reintegration process. The Ministry of Social Services provided the initial capital of C\$10,000, about US\$1,500. The co-op provided a variety of services to its members who numbered about 500 by early 1997, the most important of which was access to a savings-and-loan institution that provided credits for housing, farming and microenterprises. CIAV supplied training on basic co-op administration, financing, and personnel management for CONOR administrators and technical assistance to identify community needs and to implement programs.

### Other FN 3-80 Reintegration Projects

In contrast to the 1990 demobilization agreements, those for FN 3-80 emphasized broader social needs that were to become the basis of the reintegration process.

The Government bought the farmland and sold it to CONOR 3-80. During demobilization negotiations, the Government and FN 3-80 leaders had jointly identified the land. The co-op was to pay 50 percent of the total value over 10 years, with a 3-year grace period, at 10 percent annual interest rates. CIAV furnished a great deal of technical support to early agricultural projects, especially for a coffee plantation. It also supplied tools and seed to individual projects.

The Government and FN 3-80 agreed to construct 500 houses, especially in very poor areas. CONOR 3-80 chose those who would receive the houses, including soldiers and members of the police. Between 1995 and 1997, CIAV built 217 new houses financed by the European Union (EU) in eight communities, and supervised the construction of 20 houses financed by the Government of France. Some projects included sidewalks, playgrounds, wells, latrines, and reforestation. To reduce deforestation, CIAV and the Nicaraguan National Resources Institute built 250 high-efficiency wood stoves.

CIAV built four community halls and two schools and rehabilitated one health clinic with EU financing. The construction and rehabilitation of infrastructure permitted regional governments to provide basic health and education services.

Caulatú II committed the Government to open positions in the National Police for former FN 3-80 combatants in 13 municipalities. CIAV ran a literacy campaign for candidates before they attended the Police Academy and placed some of them in housing projects. The Academy accepted 164 candidates, of whom 63 graduated as patrolmen and 13 as officers. The Ministry of Interior appointed a high-ranking FN 3-80 leader as its representative in Quilalí, the group's main stronghold, and another became an adviser to the minister in Managua in charge of reintegration. These appointments demonstrated the Government's willingness to work closely with demobilized rearmed groups.

**CHAPTER V**  
**STRENGTHENING NICARAGUAN INSTITUTIONS**



## **A. STRONGER GRASSROOTS ORGANIZATIONS**

CIAV's success at providing otherwise unavailable services led OAS personnel to realize by at least 1993 the need to enhance the homegrown qualities of reintegration and the peace processes. This led to planning and implementing mechanisms to transfer expertise, responsibilities, and activities to Nicaraguan groups before CIAV's mission ended. In July of that year, CIAV began its Institutional Support Project (PAI) to strengthen government and grassroots organizations in the peace process to assure sustainability.

At the national level, CIAV and government institutions worked together to strengthen capacity and promote democratic values and practices. At the local level, it set up and strengthened grassroots organizations to address peace issues and deal with specific local needs and problems. The emphasis was on decentralization and active participation of communities in the peace process.

## **B. INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT PROGRAM (PAI)**

The Institutional Support Program fostered, strengthened, and expanded democratic values and national reconciliation by bolstering government agencies and citizen groups.

### **Support to National and Local Government Agencies**

CIAV cooperated with the Supreme Electoral Tribunal during the 1994 regional elections in the Northern and Southern Atlantic Autonomous Regions. It monitored the December 1993/January 1994 voter registration process and provided international observers in the February elections. Seventeen international officers of CIAV monitored pre-election campaign activities and visited voter registration centers and, on election day, polling stations. CIAV aided and supported election officials, especially in conflict areas where armed groups sometimes threatened the elections.

In June 1995, CIAV signed an agreement with the Tribunal to help issue accurate birth certificates in municipalities with large populations of ex-combatants prior to the 1996 presidential election. CIAV then helped the Tribunal register over 40,000 voters in rural communities in the former conflict areas.

To reduce the number of land disputes, CIAV and INRA agreed in November 1994 on a land-title program for the RN and former EPS personnel for 5,039 families.

CIAV organized workshops on human rights, the Nicaraguan Constitution, municipal law, and the rights of women and children in order to assist in professionalizing army and police personnel. In response to a request from the National Prison System, CIAV also designed a training course on the rights, punishment, and mental and physical health of convicts that was offered at several prisons.



To strengthen education in former conflict areas, CIAV worked with the Ministry of Education to rehabilitate and train teachers and provide teaching materials.

CIAV supported the Ministry of Health in isolated communities by contributing medical equipment and instruments to rural health clinics, publicizing vaccination campaigns, scheduling vaccinations in remote communities, and providing transportation for Ministry staff. CIAV repaired and provided fuel and spare parts for Ministry ambulances in rural areas.

#### Support to Citizens' Groups

CIAV strengthened local civic leaders, grassroots organizations, and community governments in former war zones by organizing seminars to advance civic education, promote and protect human rights, and encourage peaceful conflict resolution. These activities were performed through a network of peace commissions.

### **C. PEACE COMMISSIONS**

CIAV originated the Peace Commission Project to promote, teach, and publicize human rights in rural areas; identify and train community leaders; boost civic education; and encourage peaceful conflict resolution. Eventually there was a network of commissions throughout Nicaragua.

As sites for peace commissions, CIAV chose communities that had the largest number of human-rights violations and the highest level of violence. It chose rural leaders who were locally respected and had an interest in human rights. The OAS mission organized 852 seminars and workshops that provided training to these leaders in human rights, conflict mediation, community organization, municipal law, the Nicaraguan Constitution, and the rights of women and children. With a view to making the commissions permanent, CIAV created ties between them and Nicaraguan institutions that could support them after CIAV left. Most commissions worked with the Roman Catholic Church, which had a well-established presence in former conflict areas and enjoys the respect of rural populations.

#### Project Results

Starting in 1994, CIAV established 66 peace commissions, and by October 1997 they had investigated and processed more than 1,200 reports of human-rights violations. They also held human-rights, civic education, and conflict-mediation seminars and workshops in which more than 5,000 people participated. They helped remove and destroy 150 land mines, along with the army; negotiated several cease-fires, lowered conflict levels in 7 municipalities; and negotiated the release of 120 hostages. The commissions have also cooperated with the Supreme Electoral Tribunal in 96 municipalities to register over 172,000 new voters and collaborated with government agencies and NGOs in housing, health, development, and environment projects.

**CHAPTER VI**  
**LESSONS LEARNED**



## **A. COMPREHENSIVE PEACE PROCESS**

The CIAV experience in Nicaragua provides valuable lessons for future post-conflict activities in the Americas. Because almost all of the people involved in CIAV were from the Western Hemisphere, there was a strong foundation for a knowledgeable, responsive peace process. Where an effective regional international organization exists, there is good reason to allow it to play the central role in all regional peace processes. The Organization of American States has, through CIAV and subsequent efforts, abundantly demonstrated its capacity to be the lead organization in peace missions in the hemisphere.

As reflected in the Tela Agreement of August 7, 1989, the trust that the Central American presidents had in the secretaries general of the Organization of American States and the United Nations further proved the capacity of the OAS. Critics of the Tela mandate have sometimes claimed that it was somehow incomplete because it did not produce a rigid set of rules and restrictions for all parties in the eventual peace process. The opposite case is stronger, however, because major factors changed in Nicaragua and the world before the CIAV mission could be deployed.

There is no doubt, however, that the Tela mandate and subsequent negotiations and changes of direction once CIAV was in place represented a comprehensive approach to peace.

The Secretary General of the OAS interpreted the trust expressed by the Central American presidents as a requirement for an active OAS role in Nicaragua. No rulebook or strict management from the OAS headquarters in Washington could have brought about the enormously successful conclusion of the CIAV mission. Instead, the OAS Secretary General realized that the Nicaraguan peace effort would demand intelligence, diplomacy, flexibility, and innovation to carry out the vital tasks of disarming the members of the Resistance, the Contras, and reintegrating them into society. CIAV's effectiveness was substantially benefited when Secretary General Baena Soares initially appointed a management team that could act in his name on behalf of the peace process. The relative absence of traditional organizational structures and restrictions from Washington greatly enhanced CIAV's flexibility and effectiveness in promoting peace.

Relative administrative autonomy is not the same as political abandonment. An international peace mission must be able to count on the decisive support of the highest authorities from its headquarters and the dedicated commitment of the host government.

CIAV's experience in Nicaragua demonstrates that peace missions should be involved in all aspects of the process. It begins before the signing of peace accords and ends only when the former combatants are disarmed and fully reintegrated into productive civilian life. CIAV's ability to be involved comprehensively greatly enhanced its success and the eventual reduction of the levels of violence throughout Nicaragua.

## B. DISARMAMENT FIRST

In the case of Nicaragua, as in most other peace missions, the first essential requirement was for the Resistance fighters, the Contras, to give up their weapons. In addition, there was a need for some mechanism to reduce the size of the RN's opponents, the EPS. Progress for peace in Nicaragua would not have been possible without the yielding of weaponry. This also proved to be the case when CIAV was called on to assist in the disarmament of rearmed groups, the *recontras*, *revueltos*, and the *recompas*. Subsequent efforts in other countries have demonstrated the centrality of disarmament to a successful peace mission.

The CIAV experience firmly demonstrated that, at least in the case of a peace process led by an effective regional international organization, unarmed civilians from the same region, without any connection to the armed forces of their home countries, could accomplish disarmament far more smoothly than military forces. Civilian leadership also accomplished disarmament at a fraction of the cost of disarmament/peace processes monitored by members of the armed services or by nationals who are not completely willing to immerse themselves in the local culture.

## C. REINTEGRATION

Because CIAV understood the national culture of Nicaragua and knew the national leadership of all the political factions in the country, it was uniquely qualified to provide its good offices during the innumerable negotiations that were required to maintain peace operations on a daily basis. This credibility and knowledge was especially valuable after the unanticipated electoral victory of the Chamorro Government in 1990. At the same time, CIAV's senior leadership and protection officers benefited from the reputation of the OAS to undertake successfully a wider range of peace promotion activities.

As was the case with CIAV, peace missions should work to make the peace process sustainable. After collecting arms during the demobilization stage, CIAV provided immediate humanitarian assistance to former combatants. As the former RN combatants and their families returned to Nicaragua and settled in rural areas, CIAV had to expand its role. At once it became a surrogate government and it also became a provider or dispenser of basic necessities. Over time, and especially when rearmed groups needed to be reintegrated into Nicaragua, CIAV proved that peace missions should have the ultimate aim of promoting economic and security conditions that allow the former combatants to reintegrate effectively. If funding is available, peace missions should have the ability to provide assistance wherever it is needed, regardless of the political affiliation of a family during the armed conflict. Comprehensiveness is likely to require a peace mission to address issues such as security, political polarization, housing and land, health, education, vocational training, and income generation.

The Nicaraguan peace process was initially complicated by the change of government that occurred as a result of the February 1990 elections. The elections

caused the RN and the winning and losing parties in the elections to redefine their priorities in the postwar period. Each was attempting to maximize its strength in the face of changed political conditions. The relative independence of the military (EPS) from civilian authority (the new UNO Government) motivated some former RN combatants to rearm or alter their demands as the situation developed, endangering the peace process. At the same time, supporters of the FSLN did not desire to yield power and sought to brand the new government as weak and the RN forces seeking demobilization as supporters of former President Somoza. Finally, the new government was faced with an exceptionally challenging transition to power, with neither the former Resistance or the FSLN prepared to give way. CIAV and only CIAV was able to step in again and again in order to move the peace process along.

CIAV had to play the key role in monitoring and verifying the compliance of the government and security forces with the security guarantees that had been made to the Contras.

CIAV's energy and effectiveness was also called upon to intervene with rearmed groups that expressed grievances of various kinds. The constantly changing conditions within Nicaragua persisted for years and vastly complicated CIAV's work.

It became important for CIAV to demonstrate concretely that it was prepared to listen to and assist all sides, especially after the revision of its mandate in mid-1993. During what is often called its second phase, CIAV was able to expand its initial mandate to assist in development projects for all segments of society with the objective of improving economic and social conditions throughout Nicaragua.

#### **D. CIVILIAN NATURE OF THE PEACE MISSION**

As CIAV proved, a comprehensive approach to peace made it indispensable that the mission be composed of civilians. As ex-members of the Resistance came in contact with CIAV staff, they were exposed to an efficient and effective organizational structure that confirmed their new civilian status and removed them from the hierarchical organizational structures that they had experienced during the conflict.

CIAV's management and civilian structure was made up of a team of professionals with varied experience. It provided staffing for reintegration projects consisting of engineers, lawyers, social workers, medical staff, architects, and agronomists. These skills helped to establish solid working relationships with ex-combatants and others involved in the peace process at the community level.

#### **E. SUSTAINING PEACE**

CIAV demonstrated that involving all elements of a country's population in the peace process helps to guarantee that the process will sustain itself. CIAV knew that it would leave Nicaragua and was convinced of the necessity of building and strengthening Nicaraguan private and governmental institutions so that the progress

that had been made would not suffer. By signing working agreements with government agencies and non-governmental organizations, CIAV used its expertise and capabilities while promoting the active participation of these groups in the process. This gave more Nicaraguans a direct stake in peace.

CIAV also worked with local groups to fill the vacuum that might have been created after its departure. It designed and implemented projects to transfer its responsibilities, expertise, and activities to capable local groups before leaving Nicaragua.

#### Partners for Peace

CIAV insisted on making former combatants and other participants actual partners in reintegration projects, instead of treating them as passive beneficiaries. This enhanced real reintegration and guaranteed the success of the projects by inviting the ex-combatants and others to identify needs and solutions with CIAV staff. CIAV also assigned specific project responsibilities to former combatants, thus promoting community organization, work habits, solidarity, and a sense of accomplishment.

### **F. MISSION PLANNING**

CIAV demonstrated that peace missions need to be constructed on specific written agreements, but that there is no benefit to rigid rules. Missions also need information about the combatants (e.g., their number, where they wish to resettle, their housing and economic needs, what kind of employment they desire, and their levels of education). The experience of CIAV demonstrates that this type of information is indispensable for the successful design and implementation of reintegration programs. It also facilitates budget planning and procurement of needed resources.

Peace missions greatly benefit from the collaboration of a specified government agency that is responsible for monitoring demobilization agreements and for the implementation of reintegration programs. Such an agency and the peace mission can make reintegration plans jointly without duplicating efforts.



Commander Franklin, a leader of the Nicaraguan Resistance, salutes troops during the disarmament celebration of the Nicaraguan Resistance forces, in San Pedro Lóvago, (Chontales), on June 27, 1990.

Observing the ceremony is President,  
Violeta Barrios de Chamorro, and Cardinal Miguel Obando y Bravo.