

**Developing national capacities to  
manage “democratic security”:  
relevance of WSP International  
projects for MINUGUA’s verification  
mandate and their impacts on  
the implementation of the  
Guatemala Peace Accords**

*José Daniel Giupponi*

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This review, commissioned by WSP International, analyses the influences and impacts of a successive series of WSP-supported projects related to security sector reform and democratic security in Guatemala. These projects are known by their Spanish acronyms as POLSEDE (Towards a democratic security policy, 1999-2002), POLSEC (Towards a Citizen Security Policy, 2003-2005) and FOSS (Strengthening of the Competences of Social Organisations in the Field of Security 2003-ongoing).

Decades of civil war in Guatemala had profoundly brutalized the society and militarized the state institutions. The 1996 Peace Accords that formally put an end to the armed confrontation were unusually comprehensive but their implementation therefore also constituted an immense challenge for the State. Public policy making was stuck with a legacy of authoritarian styles of governance. The army, not subordinated to civilian power, functioned as an autonomous institution, exercised a direct influence over political authorities and retained control over certain areas of military and political interest. While the army in 1996 was prepared to formally renounce government functions, it was not ready to let go of political control. In such context the 'Agreement on the Strengthening of Civilian Power and the Role of the Military in a Democratic Society' (AFPC in its Spanish acronym) was thus an essential but also a highly sensitive aspect of the peace process. The peace agreements had also opened up space for existing and new civil society initiatives but these had as yet no legitimacy to be a participant in the definition of security policies that would promote peace and democracy.

The first important success of POLSEDE took place during its preparatory stages, by getting the agreement of the more 'orthodox' group of officials in the Ministry of National Defense to participate in a debate on issues of state security in the project's dialogue groups, a feat that required substantive skills of persuasion and political ability. Paradoxically, this was made possible by creating a space for knowledge-based but informal reflection and non-binding debate and dialogue. This represented a key achievement for democratic society, effectively removing a stumbling block that had been difficult to overcome up to that point: the military's resistance to treat these issues outside its own domain. The resulting unprecedented positive experience of inter-sectoral collaboration and the relevance of the operative recommendations that it generated, led the civil society participants to suggest a new initiative. This time the focus was to be on public security –the development of adequate institutions to face the growing problems of common and organized crime. This became the project 'Toward a Policy of Citizen Security' (POLSEC), co-sponsored by FLACSO Guatemala, the civil society organization Security in Democracy (SEDEM) and the national inter-sectoral public commission in charge of judicial reform. In response to continued demand, in 2003 WSP International with local partners initiated the FOSS project. Aiming to strengthen the technical and organizational capacities of civil society organizations so that they can competently interact with the State on issues of security, FOSS initiated two lines of work: the development and institutionalization of a Program of Democratic Security Studies, and the support program for the creation of the Security Advisory Council, a key commitment from the Peace Accords that at the time was still waiting to be implemented.

The report confirms that these projects, through their cumulative influence and impacts, have made possible substantial transformations in the Guatemalan political and policy frameworks related to democratic security. Intelligence reform and the establishment in 2004 of the Security Advisory Council are examined as examples of direct impact, while a new military doctrine and

the redeployment of military units -towards defense of the national territory rather than counter-insurgency positions - can be seen as examples of more indirect impacts. All of this is directly in line with the “Accord on Strengthening Civil Power and the Function of the Army in a Democratic Society”, one of the several 1996 Peace Accords that brought a formal end to decades of civil war.

But impacts need to be acknowledged not only at the level of concrete recommendations generated by the project that were taken up by the authorities and translated into public policy. Over the years it has become evident that Guatemalan capacities – in different sectors of the state and society- to take on the issues of security in a constructive and effective manner, have improved significantly. Equally important has been the development of new channels of communication and collaboration between the State and society, notably civil society organizations, that have generated a multi-sectoral ‘policy community’ on security issues. The positive experience of collaboration among sectors that up until then had been confrontational with one another permitted a constructive process based on trust that not only made the work within the projects possible, but also allowed the emergence of additional and complementary initiatives for dialogue and consensus building such as the ‘Defense Policy Roundtables’ convened by the Ministry of Defense with support from UNDP or the creation of a formal ‘Liaison Office’ between civil society and the subcommittees in Congress (parliament) dealing with security issues (which is being implemented through FOSS).

Achieving this within a political culture that was characterized by strong authoritarian tendencies, patronizing attitudes to ‘participation’, confrontation or marginalisation, is a major challenge. This is where the quality of process management becomes essential. Four key principles have played a role: positioning, skillful facilitation, broadened ownership and sustained engagement. The WSP project team consistently positioned itself independent and equidistant from any specific interest group in society and acted accordingly. The facilitators paid continuous and simultaneous attention to the problem, the various political sensitivities but also the personal and interpersonal dimensions of any interaction, and sought to ensure that the process remained constructive. The process was designed to be inclusive of all key stakeholders but also to broaden the ownership: the agenda, objectives and outputs were determined by the participants and not by the project team. And finally: political transformations of this nature do not happen quickly. Sustained engagement is required in order to generate the cumulative influence and impact that can make for durable change.

The WSP-supported projects also proved of great value to MINUGUA, all the more so because MINUGUA had a ‘verification’ mandate and could therefore not formally participate or intervene in the discussions among Guatemalan actors and in their decisions. The good working relationships between the WSP coordinating team and MINUGUA staff enabled the international verifiers of this particular Peace Accord to adjust their roles and interventions to the slowly evolving discussion and dynamics among the Guatemalan actors. The report concludes that where there is a UN peacebuilding mission that seeks to strengthen local capacities, WSP International and the UN can usefully sit together to discuss strategic objectives and actions, but also the central importance of process and the principles that will guide it.

## CONTENTS

- I. Introduction.
- II. Brief Background
- III. Implementing and Verifying the Accord on “Strengthening Civilian Power and the Role of the Army in Democratic Society.”
- IV. The WSP Approach and the Successive Projects.
- V. The Contribution of WSP-Supported Projects to MINUGUA’s Verification Work.
- VI. Influence and Impacts: The WSP-Supported Projects and the Implementation of a Peace Accord.
  - a. Intelligence reform
  - b. The Security Advisory Council
  - c. A new military doctrine
  - d. The re-deployment of military units
- VII. Final Considerations: The Transferability of the Guatemala Experience.

### Glossary

### Annexes

1. POLSEDE list of participants
2. POLSEDE final documents
3. POLSEC list of participants
4. POLSEC final documents
5. FOSS
  - Programme of Studies in National Security
  - Liaison Office with Congress
  - Towards a National Security System

## I. INTRODUCTION<sup>1</sup>.

The purpose of this report is to analyze the influence and impact of a successive series of WSP International (WSP) supported security-related projects in Guatemala, that started in 1999 and that are ongoing. This organization provided a clearly defined methodological approach that can be used for a variety of policy relevant exercises. In this case the approach was applied to specific thematic work on ‘democratic security’. The term ‘democratic security’ is used in Central America to signal that security of the ‘state’ cannot be separated from or be in contradiction with democracy and human rights.<sup>2</sup> In other words, the security of the population (as opposed to the authoritarian emphasis on ‘institutions’) is central. Consequently, the people have to be an actor in the articulation of security policies.

*A LONGER PROCESS IN SUCCESSIVE PROJECT FORMATS.*

***POLSEDE** (1999- 2002) *Hacia una Política de Seguridad para la Democracia (Towards a Democratic Security Policy)**

***POLSEC** (2003- ongoing) *Hacia una Política de Seguridad Ciudadana (Towards a Citizen Security Policy)**

***FOSS** (2003- ongoing) *Fortalecimiento de Organizaciones Sociales en Temes de Seguridad (Strengthening of the Competences of Social Organisations in the field of Security).**

It is relevant to analyze the contributions and impact of the successive projects from three perspectives. The first relates to the strengthening of civil society actors working on security issues in Guatemala and their current capacities. The second involves the relevance of the process and synergies between WSP and the United Nations in fulfilling the expanded mandate the United Mission in Guatemala (MINUGUA in its Spanish acronym). The third angle consists of the impact of projects promoted by WSP in fulfilling one specific component of the Peace Accords signed between the Government of Guatemala and the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity (URNG) in December 1996 that formally brought an end to the civil war.<sup>3</sup> The specific agreement referred to is the “*Accord on Strengthening Civil Power and the Function of the Army in a Democratic Society*” (henceforth AFPC).

While acting as Political Officer of MINUGUA, this consultant was responsible for the verification of Military and Police Affairs under the thematic “Area of Strengthening Civil Power” and in that role had direct experience of the implementation and influence of the above mentioned projects and of the way the challenges related to security were dealt with internally within the United Nations’ Mission. This report draws on available documentation from

---

<sup>1</sup> José Daniel Giupponi is an Uruguayan retired army officer, with the rank of Colonel, and specialized in military intelligence, military doctrine and logistics. Between 1996 and 2004 he participated in the UN Verification Mission to Guatemala MINUGUA as a Military Observer in the DDR process (1996-1997), Researcher on Military Issues (intelligence and paramilitary structures) seconded to the Guatemalan Truth Commission (1997-1999), Military Observer at the Unit on the Strengthening of Civilian Power (1999-2001), and Political Officer of the same unit, from 1999 until MINUGUA’s draw-down, at the end of 2004.

<sup>2</sup> The concept was derived from work by the South American Peace Commission (a pro-democracy think tank) and adopted and further developed by the Central American countries during the regional peace processes of the 1980s and 1990s, as alternative to and substitute for authoritarian security concepts in use during the Cold War. The concept was formally adopted in the “Central-American Framework Treaty on Democratic Security” that the regional governments signed in 1995.

<sup>3</sup> For a detailed analysis of the peace process and the essence of the Peace Accords see J. Armon et alii (ed.) 1997: **Negotiating Rights. The Guatemala peace process.** London, Conciliation Resources

security-related projects in Guatemala, in particular the POLSEDE project; the records on methodological implementation of the institutions that had supported the projects, official and work documents from the *Advisory for Strengthening of Civil Power* of MINUGUA and the Commission for Historical Clarification or Truth Commission (CEH). A representative spectrum of actors, from the civilian and military public sector and civil society organizations in Guatemala were interviewed<sup>4</sup>.

It is our belief that this specific experience in Guatemala is a meaningful reference for the United Nations to consider using similar or comparable approaches in peace-support operations in other parts of the world.

The structure of the report is as follows: Section II gives a brief contextual background prior to and at the time of the Peace Accords. This in a way constitutes the ‘base-line’ against which changes (or lack thereof) since then have to be assessed. Section III reviews the challenges in the implementation of the Accord relating to “Strengthening Civil Power and the Role of the Army in a Democratic Society”. Section IV introduces the successive WSP-supported projects and the working principles underlying their common approach. Section V looks at the contribution of the WSP-supported projects to MINUGUA’s verification work. Section VI provides examples of the influence and impacts of the WSP-supported projects on the implementation of the relevant Peace Accord. Section VII reflects on some key considerations for those who want to introduce a similar approach in other contexts.

## II. BRIEF BACKGROUND

It is necessary to understand the situation of state and society in Guatemala at the moment of signing the Peace Accords (29 December 1996), particularly with regard to the political and security environment. That situation constituted the point of departure both in the planning of civil society projects as well as for the verification work by MINUGUA. The nature and impact of the violence on the state and society during 36 years of conflict are well captured in an official report published by the United Nations stemming from the work of the Commission for Historical Clarification,<sup>5</sup> as well as abundant other political, academic and testimonial literature. This literature identifies important consequences resulting from military intervention in public life that clearly conditioned any efforts at durable peace and democratization in the country. The need to respond to these conditions was the cornerstone for the recommendations outlined in the *Agreement on the Strengthening of Civilian Power and the Role of the Army in a Democratic Society*” (AFPC in its Spanish acronym). The then state of affairs also served as the motivation for a group of Guatemalan intellectuals to promote the security projects referred to in this report.

In the period of political transition that began with the first democratic government assuming power in 1986 up to the signing of the Peace Accords in 1996, limited political and institutional space was available for the emergent democratic governments to exercise democracy. The weakness of civilian institutions was evident, resulting from the long period of military

---

<sup>4</sup> Gen. (r.) Julio Balconi, former Minister of Defense and member of the Security Advisory Council; Col. (r.) Mario Mérida, former Director of Military Intelligence and former Vice-Minister of the Interior; Héctor Rosada Granados, former Head of the Governmental delegation to the peace negotiations; Iduvina Hernández, civil society activist, Director of SEDEM; Sandino Asturias, member of URNG, Director of CEG; Enrique Alvarez, member of the Security Advisory Council, and Bernardo Arévalo de León, former Director of POLSEDE.

<sup>5</sup> **Guatemala: Memoria del Silencio.** Reporte de la Comisión de Esclarecimiento Histórico. UNOPS Guatemala, 1999.

government and the influence maintained by the military during the transition period itself. The malfunctioning of State institutions stemmed from the persistence of an authoritarian style of government that influenced the process of public policy decision-making. The army, not subordinated to civilian power, functioned as an autonomous institution and exercised a direct influence over political authorities and maintained control over determined areas of military and political interest. As several Guatemalan writers have correctly stated, the Guatemalan military sought to step out of governmental functions without actually renouncing political control, a situation that MINUGUA highlighted in detail during its tasks of verification.

At the same time, the social fabric of Guatemalan society had been torn apart and fragmented by the tight control exercised by the military over the population and territory in the framework of its counter-insurgency plans. The military's scorched-earth operations carried out by the State involved cases of genocide against the indigenous population - which constitute the majority in rural regions of the country. Up until the time of the signing of the Peace Accords between the Guatemalan State and the URNG, mediated by the United Nations, the conflict had resulted in approximately one and a half million displaced persons,<sup>6</sup> over 200,000 dead or disappeared,<sup>7</sup> and over one million Guatemalans forcibly recruited into the Civilian Defense Patrols (PAC)<sup>8</sup>, in a context characterized by discrimination, militarization of public security and social polarization. The difficulties of reconciling a society after decades of violence and confrontation are obvious.

The Peace Accords formally ended 36 years of internal armed conflict. But they evidently left Guatemalan society with a complex social and political situation and the state, with the primary responsibility to implement the various agreements, with an immense challenge. While there was now new space for existing and new civil society initiatives and organizations, these had to find ways to gain legitimacy as a participant in the definition of security policies that would promote peace and democracy. It was evident that the task of rebuilding the Guatemalan state would need to involve the entire nation. The situation presented an equally formidable challenge for the United Nations in terms of carrying out the verification process, because there was then still very limited institutional experience with 'peace-building' missions.<sup>9</sup>

### **III. IMPLEMENTING AND VERIFYING THE ACCORD ON 'STRENGTHENING CIVILIAN POWER AND THE ROLE OF THE ARMY IN A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY.'**

Given that the military control over the State represented a central characteristic of the Guatemalan authoritarian State during the era of the internal armed conflict, demilitarization was a key element of the Peace Accords. The militarization of State structures and society had been fundamental in allowing the authoritarian governments to exercise power even prior to the

---

<sup>6</sup> Guatemala, *Memoria del Silencio*. Vol V, p38

<sup>7</sup> Guatemala, *Memoria del Silencio*. Vol V, p21

<sup>8</sup> Guatemala, *Memoria del Silencio*. Vol II, p190.

<sup>9</sup> The *ABC of the United Nations*, edition 1998, noted the pioneering character of MINUGUA in the context of Peace Operations: "To face the multiplication of conflicts within States, the Security Council has authorized innovative and complex peace operations. In El Salvador and Guatemala...the United Nations has performed an important function in putting an end to civil war and achieving peace...the experience shows that to maintain peace, in the sense of avoiding military conflict, it is not enough to establish a secure and lasting peace. Such security can only be achieved helping countries to promote economic development, social justice, the protection of human rights, good public administration and the democratic process..."

internal armed conflict. It was evident the required changes would include a redefinition of the role of the military within a democratic society, as a key component in the transition towards durable peace. Without a doubt, this was the most difficult task for the various actors involved in the peace process. In this sense, the actions defined in the AFPC were directed toward two specific objectives: the first objective sought to redefine the role of the military within a democratic society, and the second was to strengthen civil society institutions.

The process of readapting the military's role to the new political reality began by dismantling the internal military structures, in particular military intelligence, through which the military controlled the State. But more comprehensive reforms were needed: laws, doctrines, plans, policies and other instruments had to be reformed in order to limit the Army's excessive political influence and to reorient its role towards new functions relevant to a military institution operating within a modern democratic State.

The first measures implemented by the government were carried out even before the signing of the Peace Accords, and involved the demobilization of paramilitary forces known as the Military Commissioners and the Voluntary Civilian Defense Patrols, as well as closing down several military bases. These preliminary measures were positively received, and in the view of civil society augured well for the future. Organizations that dealt with security issues were particularly heartened by the moves, which seemed to demonstrate that the Army was willing to introduce structural reforms on its own initiative. However, experience showed that the demobilization of the paramilitary forces was a formal measure, unaccompanied by plans to effectively remove the violent mindset instilled in over 1 million 'campesinos' who were forced to take part in these institutions, except for the timid speeches made by the Army's Civil Affairs office, and observed by MINUGUA. Even today, democratic transition governments in Guatemala are burdened with the consequences stemming from the weakness of the Army's actions.<sup>10</sup>

*MINUGUA: THE UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN GUATEMALA*

*MINUGUA was created and deployed in November 21, 1994. Its original mandate was the verification of human rights abuses and their protection in the context of peace negotiations between the Government and armed insurgency. Following the signing of the Peace Accords in late 1996, its mandate was changed to verification of the implementation of the multiple and detailed agreements that were signed by the parties. This required new strategic planning but also the restructuring of the mission, leading for example to the opening of new MINUGUA offices to enable a countrywide presence. The verification work was thematically organized. The thematic area directly concerned with the role of the military and democratic security was one that verified implementation of the agreements contained in the "Accord on the Strengthening of Civilian Power and the Function of the Army in a Democratic Society". The end of the MINUGUA mission was originally scheduled for late 2000. Slow progress in the implementation of the Peace Accords forced an extension of the mission. MINUGUA continued till the end of 2004 and is generally deemed a success.*

*(United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala. Report of the Secretary General. UN Doc. A/59/746. 2005)*

When the Peace Accords went into effect in 1997, further actions were taken such as the elimination of other military units – including the emblematic Mobile Military Police (Policía Militar Ambulante) – along with the reduction of the military budget. However, it is worth

---

<sup>10</sup> Retired military officers linked to political parties have reactivated networks established within the framework of paramilitary forces, using them as a tool for destabilization in electoral politics.

underlining that the fulfillment of the aforementioned commitments represented those established in the AFPC as requiring immediate compliance, and those linked to the end of the conflict itself, and which therefore were more easily carried out and did not visibly affect the ideological orthodoxy held by groups within the Army.

Meanwhile, the deep seated changes implicit in the legal and doctrinal reforms that were to guide military conversion were not dealt with, and the Army had not demonstrated much interest in making any progress in these areas, aware that such reforms implied profound institutional changes. The United Nations repeatedly called on the government to present a restructuring plan in accordance with deadlines set and agreed upon between the relevant parties for the fulfillment of the AFPC. In response, the government limited itself to advising MINUGUA to deal directly with the military authorities, whose high command in fact possessed no such plans whatsoever.

By 1999 it was clear that the process of fulfilling the AFPC had come to a standstill. Various reports by the United Nations Secretary General denounced the delays internationally, pointing out the lack of advances in terms of security, demilitarization in accordance with defined parameters, such as the re-deployment of forces on the ground, the re-conversion of military intelligence, the dismantling of the Army's Presidential Chief of Staff's office, or the creation of a new military doctrine - all vital elements for a genuine military reform.

In its public reports, MINUGUA pointed out that the Army continued to supervise the public security activities of the National Police; the Army's Civil Affairs Unit remained active, obtaining political and social intelligence from around the country, and Military Intelligence remained active in public security tasks, as well as in other areas. Resistance to comply with the letter and spirit of the Peace Accords began to take clear expression as in the Armed Forces' attempts to justify its historical institutional role and resist change of its counterinsurgent military doctrine.<sup>11</sup> It became evident that progress on the commitments agreed in the AFPC was subject to the professional profile and personal commitment to the Accords of those officers in charge of the Ministry of Defense at a given time, as they decided -often without consulting the President- how much progress would be made.

Even before the signing of the Peace Accords, there were many civil society organizations in Guatemala working on security-related issues. Several intellectuals, who had authored books on the war and the subsequent peace process, demonstrated the existence of significant interest in understanding the issues related to security. However, for reasons already mentioned, before the beginning of the first WSP supported project (POLSEDE in 1999), civil society was in no position to take on such critically important issues. One of the reasons for this was the Army's unwillingness to openly debate State security policies, which the military considered to be a classified matter to be dealt with by the Army alone. MINUGUA believed that an organized civil society should be meaningfully involved in carrying out these reforms, not only to contribute to the fulfillment of the commitments acquired during the Accords, but also in order to legitimate and consolidate objectives already achieved.

The start of the POLSEDE project by WSP beginning in 1999 represented the initiation of a process of genuine change in terms of the development of conceptual and operational frameworks for security. One of its biggest virtues was the inclusive approach that sought to

---

<sup>11</sup> MINUGUA. **Reporte de Verificación. Compromisos de los Acuerdos de Paz relativos al Ejército.** Mayo 2002

bring together a range of State actors (civilians but also members of the military) and civil society organizations, as well as the United Nations and other international aid agencies.

#### IV. THE WSP APPROACH AND THE SUCCESSIVE PROJECTS.

Building upon core principles in the WSP approach, FLACSO Guatemala, the Guatemalan Institute for Development and Peace (IGEDEP) and WSP International in 1999 jointly designed the project POLSEDE, which was implemented between 1999 and 2002.<sup>12</sup> The project –and process- brought together government institutions - including the armed forces - along with organizations from civil society and academic institutions, as well as invited specialists.<sup>13</sup> The purpose of the project-process was to promote the search for solutions to the problems of democratic security, in the context of both the Political Constitution of the Republic and the Peace Accords, that would permit the fulfillment of the AFPC, and that, as a direct result, could lead to the reform of security-related sectors.

*WSP INTERNATIONAL AND CORE PRINCIPLES OF ITS APPROACH.*

*WSP originated as a pilot project within the UN family (1994-1998). In 2000 WSP International was registered as an international association in Switzerland. Its core mission is to support capacities within societies that face deep divisions and/or destructive conflict to build bridges across those divides and to facilitate multi-sectoral constructive dialogue(s) towards agreements on how to address the deeper problems. Project-processes will therefore always be steered by carefully constituted teams of people of the society concerned.*

*Its approach (derived from participatory action research or PAR) is flexible but grounded in some core principles: project team independent of any specific interest group in society; equidistance from or impartiality (neutrality) between all actors in the society concerned; inclusiveness of all key stakeholders; informality of the process; transparency of the process; non-binding process; broadening the ownership of the process to allow the key stakeholders and participants to agree on and drive the agenda; knowledge input in the debate acquired via special research or broad-based consultation if and where needed; simultaneous attention to the political, the problem and the (inter)personal; building and maintaining trust; facilitation of constructive debate and dialogue; consensual outputs (conclusions, recommendations, proposals...).*

*The process and its substance are therefore considered of equal importance.*

*Where key stakeholders and participants may not have the competences (knowledge, skills) and/or confidence that allow meaningful participation, special activities or even projects may be undertaken to strengthen those competences and/or confidence.*

The preparatory phase of the POLSEDE project took place between June and August of 1999. The objectives were to identify the various social and political actors involved in security

---

<sup>12</sup> An evaluation has been carried out in 2002 during the final stage of the POLSEDE project undertaken jointly by WSP International, the Geneva Center for Democratic Control of the Armed Forces and the UNDP. See Fluri, Philipp; Secundino González; Jesús Rodés, and Philip Sargisson. “Sistematización y Lecciones Aprendidas del Proyecto. La importancia de la aproximación del WSP en el proceso de reconstrucción del sector de seguridad y Gobierno en Guatemala.” En Arévalo de León, Bernardo; José Beltán Doña y Philipp Fluri (Eds). **Hacia una Política de Seguridad para la Democracia. Investigación Acción Participativa y Reforma del Sector Seguridad.** DCAF-Lit Verlag, Munster, 2005.

issues,<sup>14</sup> followed by consultations with a variety of social actors and politicians in order to guarantee the necessary space for a neutral and independent political-academic platform, and to gain the necessary basic confidence of key stakeholders.

The following phase involved a preliminary investigation and took place from September 1999 to April 2000. In this phase the rough draft was developed of the "Basis for the consideration of the military question in Guatemala". In essence this consisted of a preliminary diagnostic of the situation regarding civil-military relations following the end of the conflict. At a general meeting of all the key social and political actors (the 'project group' in WSP terminology), this working document was discussed and the meeting participants then agreed that they would all benefit from intensive research and debate on five key issues: the conceptual framework of civil-military relations in a democratic state; the concept and agenda of security; military doctrine; democratic controls (reform of the intelligence apparatus, institutionalization of security and citizen participation); and military function. For each topic a multi-sectoral Working Group was then created, bringing together key stakeholders and thematic experts.<sup>15</sup>

Participatory action research around each topic followed between May of 2000 and January of 2002. Each Working Group chose its own moderator among the participants, and was supported by a researcher selected by the Project Coordination Team. The research agendas, timetables, and necessary documentation to support the research effort were developed by the researcher for approval by consensus by the Working Group.<sup>16</sup>

The overall level of activity in the project was very intense, including 10 meetings of the overall 'project group' made up of high-level authorities and directors of participating public and private institutions – and more than 200 topic-based Working Group meetings involving technical-level participants from the various participating entities and institutions. The Working Groups' outputs were eventually presented to the higher-level 'project group'. Following more debate a series of documents were then approved by consensus, each one with operative recommendations related to the chosen issues<sup>17</sup>.

In addition and in support of this participatory research, several specialized seminars were held, to give participants in the Guatemala process access to the lessons learned in similar cases of institutional transformation. The international conference on 'Military Function and Democratic Control', the seminar on 'Supervision and Control of the Intelligence System' (organized jointly

---

<sup>14</sup> The project "Toward a Democratic Security Policy" (POLSEDE) was supported by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) and was financed by the government of Norway and the Netherlands, and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

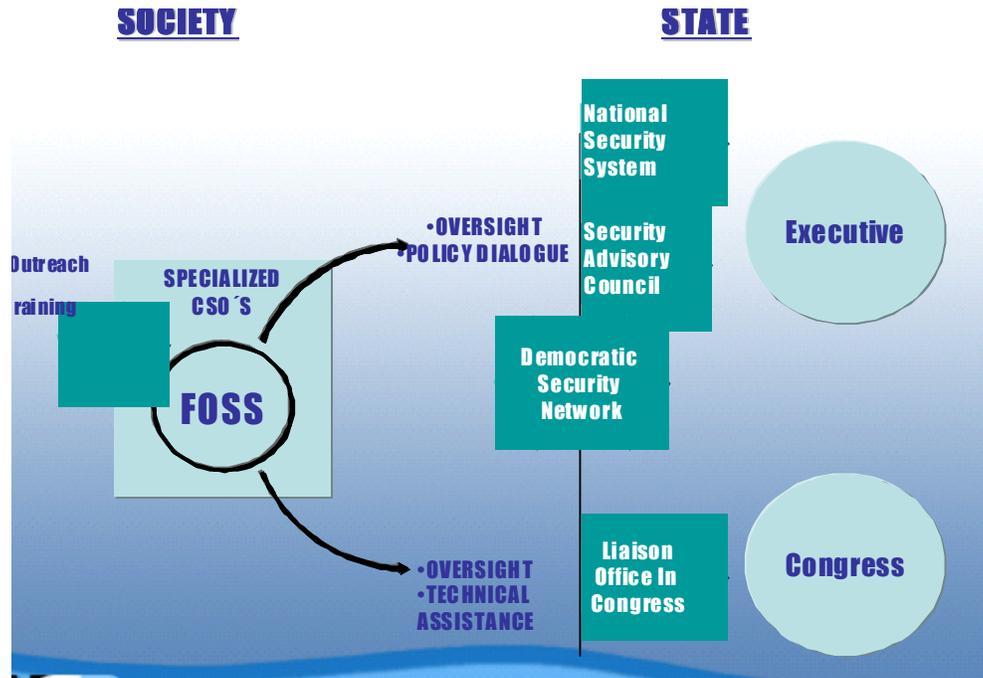
<sup>15</sup> In addition to the work groups dealing with these issues, another sub group was created later in the process, at the specific request of the government, to deal with the creation of a civil intelligence organ that would answer to the Ministry of Interior (*Ministerio de Gobernación*) and would respond to the issues of common and organized crime, substituting military intelligence in this function.

<sup>16</sup> Colonel Mario Mérida noted that in 1987 the Guatemalan army had already attempted a civil-military dialogue, with the objective of introducing changes in the military institution, but the results were limited, as there was no clear conceptualization of the military's function in a democratic society and it was not the appropriate political moment: the conflict was raging, the military as an institution was not as open to dialogue as it would become by 1999, nor was there an interest or trust among civil society to engage with the military in a debate on security issues.

<sup>17</sup> At the Project Group, State institutions were usually represented by vice ministers, sub-secretaries or unit directors, while private institutions, such as NGOs academic institutions, etc., were represented by their directors, assistant deans, etc. See Annexes 1 and 2 for the list of participant institutions and final proposals approved.



a strategy for strengthening the technical and organizational capacities of civil society organizations in order to constructively interact with the State in issues of security, FOSS established initially two lines of work: the development and institutionalization of a Program of Democratic Security Studies (PESD), and the support program for the creation of the Security Advisory Council (CAS), a key commitment from the Peace Accords that had not been implemented so far.<sup>21</sup> The efforts to support implementation of the Security Advisory Council have resulted in the creation of a Preparatory Commission and then finally, in 2004 and upon its recommendation, the establishment of the Council attached to the Presidency of the Republic. Simultaneous efforts to promote collaboration between civil society and political parties in Congress (the ‘parliament’) have resulted in a signed agreement between civil society organizations and Congressional authorities, signed in early 2004, to establish a formal ‘Liaison Office’ that supports the work of the congressional committees –fundamentally National Defense, Interior (which oversees public security issues), and Legislation- dealing with security issues. The Program of Democratic Security Studies –with the participation of several universities, research centers and specialized NGO’s- in turn has resulted in a series of concrete policy proposals that express the level of technical command the organizations have reached in these issues.<sup>22</sup>



This reviewer can testify to the fact that all those interviewed coincide in stating that such significant results are thanks to the constant application of the WSP approach in all these projects, and the gradual but persistent development of stronger local capacities. An equally important element but less visible element has been the project leadership’s capacity to

---

in March of 2004, and since then the project has continued with the support of the Ministry of Defense of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the Swedish International Cooperation Agency. See Annex 5 for details on participants and activities.

<sup>21</sup> On the reasons for this deferral and the role of WSP in its implementation, see further in section VI.b.

<sup>22</sup> For a list of projects carried out by the different institutions under this program, see Annex 5.

successfully deal with the inevitable tensions that come with the political context and the delicate subjects under discussion. This is a function they have continued to fulfill even after the formal completion of the projects. Some of those interviewed were very specific in stating that the combination of the methodology used in the project and the talent of the Coordinating Team for handling complex political situations and relations with social sectors and the government, provided the necessary balance necessary to achieve successful results.

This experience of an ongoing process (packaged in successive projects) for now already more than 5 years, shows very clearly that working according to the core principles of the WSP approach can effectively contribute to the development of a social and political dynamic that goes beyond the transitory nature of the projects. Over time we see the empowerment of a diversity of governmental and non-governmental actors in Guatemala through a solid base of values and capacities to assist dialogue and multi-sector collaboration; confidence building through the development of successful and effective experiences of multi-sector collaboration in conditions of transparency; the effective incorporation of new and varied actors into decision-making processes. All of these are results that install within a society stronger capacities for conducting and resolving the challenges involved in managing divisions and conflicts without resort to violence.

## **V. THE CONTRIBUTION OF WSP-SUPPORTED PROJECTS TO MINUGUA'S VERIFICATION WORK.**

In terms of the objective of strengthening national security capacities and, specifically, strengthening civil society, the POLSEDE project was very timely.<sup>23</sup> Let us remember the weakness of especially the civilian State institutions and the dispersion of emerging civil society organizations with regard to the question of security and the role of the military. Some of these civil society organizations came to the project having already begun relevant work, focusing within their programs on issues such as intelligence, civil security and the military budget, among other issues. Nonetheless, progress in these areas was uncoordinated, individual projects were isolated and had limited technical capacity, and hadn't arrived at a consensus among themselves or with the government.

At the beginning, there was some skepticism within MINUGUA about the potential scope of coordination given that POLSEDE's timetable indicated that the activities and the final results would not be completed until after the completion of the Mission's activities, originally set in the Peace Accords for the year 2000, the date by which the commitments of the AFPC should have been completed. The slow implementation of the Peace Accords then led to a formal extension of the mission, which created a new perspective on the relationship with civil society organizations and a project like POLSEDE. Periodic consultations with civil society organizations working in the area of security were included within the strategic programming of the verification work in the Area of Civil Power Strengthening (*Área de Fortalecimiento del Poder Civil*, AFPC). These meetings, aimed at exchanging information and analysis, were greatly helped by the fact that the POLSEDE project now brought these organizations together. The scope of the POLSEDE project in the meantime had also become clearer and there was obvious coherence and potential for synergies between its objectives and those of the MINUGUA component relative to institutional and civil society strengthening. There was no hesitation then in the relevant unit of the United Nations Verification Mission about inscribing

---

<sup>23</sup> Hector Rosada Granados.

development of inter-institutional collaboration and cooperation with the WSP projects within its strategic plan.

Even before MINUGUA's structural changes, resulting from the extension of the verification process, the personnel responsible for verifying the commitments related to military and police issues in the AFPC had in any case already developed close ties with the Coordination Team of the POLSEDE project, creating an important working synergy in both directions, which translated into both formal and informal support for the project. The synergies developed between POLSEDE and MINUGUA were atypical because, distinct from other UN agencies that supported the project (UNDP – UNOPS), MINUGUA's verification role meant that it could not be both “judge and jury” in the implementation of the Accords. More clearly, MINUGUA could not participate or intervene in the discussions among Guatemalan actors or in their decisions, not only because of its role as an international actor, but also because if it had intervened directly or indirectly to influence the results of projects that were linked to the fulfillment of the AFPC commitments, the Mission would be in violation of the organization's principles of neutrality and impartiality.

As a result, the interactions between POLSEDE and the Mission, particularly with the verifiers, were oriented toward monitoring the advancement of the debate and of the partial results produced through it, and offering commentary and technical advice when approached, from the perspective that these initiatives should be in line with the spirit and the letter of the AFPC. The officials responsible for this thematic area of MINUGUA's work also attended regularly all of the public events organized by the projects, including formally participating in the ‘Basic Security and Defense’ course that POLSEDE organized for civilians and military personnel. The periodic consultations, the informal contacts and the participation in public events allowed the Mission to remain informed throughout the evolution and transformation of the project and its results.

It is important to emphasize and acknowledge here that these interactions between MINUGUA and WSP throughout the POLSEDE process, enabled the international verifiers from the AFPC to redirect their efforts and make the planning and prioritizing of their work more flexible, thus optimizing their human resources. One concrete example of this was the synergy developed between POLSEDE and the Mission regarding the formulation of the new Military Doctrine, which enabled them to overcome military resistance to the fulfillment of this commitment. Real synergies therefore resulted from the interaction.

In general, the synergies developed between WSP and MINUGUA enabled both entities to advance toward concrete results from different directions, yet in a complementary manner. While the Mission demanded that the government complies with the State Security agenda as it emerged from the Peace Accords, POLSEDE and the projects that were derived from it, offered State actors an alternative platform for debate, negotiation and for the search for solutions to the problems of conversion and institutional strengthening of the security sector. While the United Nations maintained a formal and institutional relationship with the Government, WSP was more autonomous, less subject to formalities and more flexible thanks to their multi-sectoral character, which made it possible to complement MINUGUA's verification work.

## **VI. INFLUENCE AND IMPACTS: THE WSP-SUPPORTED PROJECTS AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A PEACE ACCORD.**

When POLSEDE began two years after the Peace Accords were signed, State Security remained within the domain of the military sector, a situation the Verification Mission sought to address by emphasizing the need to strengthen political control over the armed forces and by promoting the participation of civil society in dealing with these issues. Faced with a society that, as we have shown, was fragmented, and a government with technical and political limitations in fulfilling the Peace Accords, the Army limited itself to satisfying only those aspects of the AFPC that would not affect its quota of political power, striving to maintain its structural and doctrinal mechanisms of political and social control, developed during the conflict. This situation of military hegemony started to revert itself with the implementation of the POLSEDE project, which opened the space to examine the technical foundations of this hegemonic position.

There are two levels on which POLSEDE, POLSEC and FOSS respectively but also cumulatively have had and continue to have a real impact: the first relates to the specific achievements of the projects themselves; the second relates to the fulfillment of the Peace Accords, notably the AFPC.

The first important success of POLSEDE took place during its preparatory stages, by getting the agreement of the more ‘orthodox’ group of officials in the Ministry of National Defense to participate in a debate on issues of state security in the project's dialogue groups, a feat that required substantive skills of persuasion and political ability. Paradoxically, this was made possible by creating a space for knowledge-based but informal reflection and non-binding debate and dialogue. This represented a key achievement for democratic society, effectively removing a stumbling block that had been difficult to overcome up to that point: the military's resistance to treat these issues outside its own domain. Achieving this first goal is even more noteworthy when taking into account the fact that no legal norm existed obliging the military to discuss these issues with civilian organizations in an environment outside the institution. The fine understanding of the Coordinating Team and several key participants from Government and civil society regarding the then mentality prevailing among the Guatemalan military and the political context in which they operated, ultimately permitted them to maneuver around these difficulties and establish a procedure for dialogue that the Army, in spite of its interest in maintaining exclusive control over these issues, could not ignore.<sup>24</sup>

POLSEDE thus managed to bring together civil society actors, the Army (which included an official delegation of the Military High Command), politicians, eminent civilians and retired military, and began proceedings. The mutual distrust between civil society organizations and the military that was characteristic of the post-conflict dynamics was evident at the beginning of the research process. Nevertheless, the polarization and distrust between these actors began disappearing as the project progressed, without signifying that the various participating sectors had renounced their ideological or institutional principles.

---

<sup>24</sup> General Julio Balconi, ex-Minister of National Defense of Guatemala and participant in the project's discussion groups. Colonel Mario Mérida, agreed that initially there existed within the Army skepticism towards the convenience of discussing security matters with civilians. Nevertheless, due to the momentum created at the beginning of the POLSEDE project, the Army felt obliged to join.

One retired officer<sup>25</sup> interviewed for this report, affirmed that the process through which those involved in the project began opening up to others – specifically between military and civilians, among whom were ex guerrilla combatants - not only promoted an atmosphere of understanding that was generally reflected in the final results of the project, but also symbolized the possibility of reconciliation in the country.

Directly relevant for this was the notable development of the technical-thematic knowledge and skills of members of participant civilian organizations already during the period of the initial POLSEDE. Many of those expressed a left-leaning personal or institutional ideology that was the main motivation behind their interest on the issue. The main national institution behind the effort, FLACSO-Guatemala, was at the time perceived by the Army as representing the orthodox and revolutionary left. After the POLSEDE and POLSEC projects, and as a direct consequence of these, many of the participating individuals and institutions started, and to this day continue, to provide consultancies for State institutions on security-related issues in Guatemala. The training and the expertise acquired<sup>26</sup> during the course of the projects led to the development of aptitudes and attitudes that influenced the transformation over time in civil-military relations. As a result, changes that would have been unthinkable in Guatemalan society a few years before began to be apparent. People and institutions who had identified themselves as part of the spectrum of leftist organizations during the conflict years and who opposed counterinsurgent state strategies, became technical resources on security issues, advising, proposing and lobbying before public institutions for the sake of better State security capacities. In carrying out these functions, they have combined not only the elements of political representation they have as recognized members – individual and institutional- of civil society, but the technical capabilities derived from the knowledge obtained through the process.<sup>27</sup> As a result, the public policy debate developed in the policy formulation mechanisms or through the media is characterized by a higher level of technical proficiency than would generally be expected in exchanges between Government officials and civil society activists. This capacity and the political skills developed through years of continued dialogue processes enable them to become effective interlocutors with representatives of the Ministry of National Defense and the Ministry of the Interior- who ideologically remain in the conservative right-, allowing for a healthy and harmonious balance expressed in proposals acceptable to both society and the State.<sup>28</sup>

---

<sup>25</sup> Colonel Mario Mérida contributed valuable insights on this issue. He manifested that for many officers, participation in the discussion groups of the POLSEDE project, represented what he called an “ideological catharsis” as a result of the dialogue between social actors and the Government, emphasizing as an additional value the informal contacts developed throughout the process. At the end of the event, he added, “*the left wasn’t so left, and the right wasn’t so right, and civil society could verify that the military institution was made up of people with social sensibility*”.

<sup>26</sup> Iduvina Hernández, Director of SEDEM, explained that the POLSEDE project was a vehicle that permitted organizations like the one she directed – dedicated to the study of Intelligence issues – to obtain the necessary development and expertise needed by non governmental and governmental organizations to promote the reforms needed for military reconversion.

<sup>27</sup> A number of the participants in POLSEDE, POLSEC and FOSS are members of the Security Advisory Council, which was set up to advise the President of the Republic on these issues. Through FOSS's Liaison Office in Congress, established by way of an Agreement signed between the President of Congress and the project's Director, persons and organizations from civil society act as advisors of the corresponding parliamentary commissions, organizing seminars, supporting in the legislative discussion of issues, lobbying on specific matters, etc. The dialogue Round Table for the establishment of the National Security System, convened by the Government for the design and implementation of an integrated institutional framework for Security Sector, is being developed with full participation of civil society in its debates, and the methodological coordination of WSP International.

<sup>28</sup> All of the interviews carried out for this consultancy agreed with these affirmations, emphasizing that this result was the direct consequence of the project, which generated trust between antagonistic social actors.

Over the years it became evident that the Guatemalan capacities – in different sectors of the state and society- to take on the issues of security in a constructive and effective manner had improved significantly. The positive experience of collaboration among sectors that up until then had been confrontational with one another, permitted a constructive process based on trust that not only made the work within POLSEDE, POLSEC and FOSS possible, but also allowed the emergence of additional and complementary initiatives for dialogue and a consensus among civilians and military personnel. One example of these would be the Defense Policy Groups (*Mesas de Política de Defensa*) convened by the Ministry of Defense under the auspices of the UNDP.

A second level of analysis directs us to the contribution of the POLSEDE project and its successors POLSEC and FOSS, for the fulfillment of the commitments established in the AFPC. On this issue, the projects have had two types of impact: direct and indirect. Direct impacts can be seen where final recommendations formulated and agreed upon through the projects, have had a direct influence on specific legal and institutional reforms, or in the development of new social and political processes undertaking security sector reform tasks. The indirect impact refers to transformations that have not been discussed directly in the context of POLSEDE, POLSEC and FOSS, but that are the expression of these new conceptual, technical and political capacities developed in the local actors by these processes. The two frequently go together, as progress towards durable peace requires both relational and substantive changes.

Examples of direct impact towards the fulfillment of AFPC commitments can be found in the case of intelligence reform and in the establishment of the Security Advisory Council. Among the most visible examples of indirect effects we can note the adoption of a new military doctrine and in the implementation of a new, post-conflict military territorial deployment.

*a. Intelligence Reform.*

Current policy debate on intelligence reform in Guatemala is based upon the conceptual framework and operational recommendations developed through successive WSP projects. The initial recommendations that emerged from the POLSEDE Working Groups on this issue in 2001 and 2002 initiated concrete steps that were carried out in parallel by different Governmental departments. One of these was the Presidential Secretariat for Strategic Analysis, a civilian unit established as a counterbalance to the military units advising on strategic issues to the President during the conflict years. This unit decided to translate the POLSEDE recommendations into draft legislation through a participatory process that included representatives of other State institutions and civil society organizations, many of which had been part of POLSEDE's deliberations. The recommendations of the non-binding POLSEDE process were thus transformed into a Draft Framework Law on Intelligence through successive rounds of negotiations between 2003 and 2005.

In 2002, in one of the Working Groups of the second project (POLSEC), civil society and state officers continued work on the definition of the operational issues pertaining to the establishment of intelligence capacities for public security in the Ministry of the Interior. In order to further advance the process, the Minister of the Interior established an ad-hoc Commission to elaborate the necessary draft legislation, which used as the basis of its deliberations the documents elaborated through POLSEDE and POLSEC. The Director of POLSEC was invited to coordinate the Commission, which then presented a consensual

proposal that the Minister sent to Congress for consideration in 2003. Under a new Government, civil society organizations, with the support of Government officials, have lobbied as of 2004 through the Liaison Office in Congress (an outcome of the 3th project, FOSS) to accelerate consideration of these proposals by the relevant parliamentary commissions.

These draft law proposals, and the original POLSEDE and POLSEC documents, are now the basis for the work of the Working Group on Intelligence Reform that is considering the issue within the context of the Dialogue Roundtable for the establishment of a National Security System. In the words of one of the most important experts on intelligence reform in Latin America:

*“We firmly believe that such an example as the capacity of Guatemalan civil society to elaborate and formulate serious policy proposals, and the impact of civil society on an issue so rarely accessible to non-initiated people, such as aspects related to the intelligence activity, can hardly be found elsewhere”... “Most probably, one of the major credits of the POLSEDE program was to maximize the capacity of civil society in terms of national defence, interior security and defence, providing it with technical elements from all over the world, including Latin American experiences”.*<sup>29</sup>

b. The Security Advisory Council.

A second example, not only of direct impact of the successive projects, but also of the synergies between WSP and MINUGUA and directly related to the implementation of an AFPC commitment, is the creation, after years of delay, of the Security Advisory Council. Indeed, the AFPC had established that the creation of such Council would be a necessary formal platform from which civil society representatives could officially advise the president regarding the development of public security policies, institutionalizing civil society’s oversight role and developing a civilian counter-balance in case of continued military domination of state security institutions.

When the POLSEDE project began in 1999, it became clear that the government lacked the political will to fulfill this commitment. The political polarization that still existed between civilians and the military, the mistrust and general tension between civil society and the government, and the lack of technical expertise within civil society organizations that could have served as consultants on the issue, led to the continued deferral of implementation, despite constant reminders from MINUGUA and calls from different political sectors. But both MINUGUA and WSP continued to work on the issue simultaneously: MINUGUA continued its efforts to establish a technical reference framework for such a Council in its negotiations with the government, mobilizing the support of international experts. At the same time, POLSEC established a Working Group in which Governmental officials and civil society representatives reached an initial consensus on key issues.

Finally, in mid 2003 the Government asked WSP International to mediate between civil society organizations and the Government in order to arrive at a jointly agreed solution. With the constant accompaniment of MINUGUA through the relevant unit, the process with its series of

---

<sup>29</sup> Ugarte, José Manuel. “La reforma de Inteligencia en Guatemala, el aporte de la sociedad civil a solucionar problemas fundamentales del Estado”. In Arévalo de León, Bernardo; Beltrán Doña, José, and Fluri, Philipp (Eds.) **Ops. Cit.**

meetings, led to the creation of a Preparatory Commission of civil society representatives tasked with developing a consensual proposal. This proposal, developed and legitimized through a wide consultation process, was presented to the new Governmental authorities elected in 2004. The President, recognizing the legitimacy and representative character of the process, decided to adopt its recommendation. The Security Advisory Council, attached to the President's Office was eventually established in mid-2004.

We see then that the results of several of the successive project played a direct role in the implementation of commitments of the AFPC

c. *A new Military Doctrine.*

The impact of the WSP-supported projects on the adoption of a new military doctrine for the role of the armed forces in a peaceful and democratic society, one of the key transformations necessary for the development of a modern and democratic security apparatus, has been indirect. Indirect here means simply that the final result was not elaborated in the context of WSP-led processes. At the same time, its contribution has been fundamental in generating critical input that enabled the process that actually led to the development of a new doctrine.

The commitment for the development of a new 'military doctrine' was indeed agreed upon in the AFPC, but without reference to a general 'defense policy' framework that should be the departing point for such an effort. This led to confusion as to the exact meaning of the commitment made, one that the more conservative forces in the military tried to use to their benefit. In 1999, when the POLSEDE project was starting, the Ministry of Defense had publicly presented a 'military doctrine' that had been elaborated by an ad-hoc Commission composed exclusively of active military officers. In addition to such process being contrary to the Verification Mission's recommendation to proceed in collaboration with civilians, the proposal was a confused aggregation of texts that included elements that justified the role of the armed forces during the armed conflict and contradicted the principles that should guide the military in a democratic society. MINUGUA considered the text as unacceptable, and engaged in a dialogue with the military on the requirements for true compliance with the letter of the commitment. At the same time, POLSEDE established one Working Group devoted to the issue of military doctrine, in which civilians and military explored the issue in an attempt to clarify the existing confusion. MINUGUA closely collaborated with POLSEDE's coordination team in facilitating the elements necessary for such clarification. The final recommendations of POLSEDE included a clear distinction between the political and technical aspects of the military doctrine, pointing to the need to develop a general 'defense policy' framework as a precondition to advance on the technical aspects of the issue.

By 2001, the military had begun a second attempt to develop a new 'military doctrine' by itself, which was again an attempt to formally comply with the Peace Accords without renouncing its basic counterinsurgency principles. MINUGUA once more refused to accept the document for reasons of content and process, and continued engaging the military in a dialogue over the issue, while closely observing the advancement over this issue in the POLSEDE project. By that time, the understandings of this topic developed through POLSEDE, and the exposure of military officers to other sources of information, began to modify the army's position. The new authorities in the Ministry of Defense decided in 2003 to implement with the support of UNDP a dialogue process with participation of civil society with the explicit goal to formulate a 'defense

policy' for the country<sup>30</sup>. By then, sufficient trust had been developed between civilians and the military through the POLSEDE experience, for the latter to invite civilian participation in a reflection and debate that until then had been considered a military preserve, and for the civilians to accept the invitation to participate in a dialogue that took place in a military base that is symbolically charged. Several civil society actors by then had developed the technical sufficiency to engage in a dialogue on this topic. Moreover, the POLSEDE recommendations were granted the status of official documentation. The process led to the publication in 2003 of a White Paper on Defense Policy, which was an expression of unprecedented convergence between state and civil society.

While the political conditions allowing for such a consensus came into existence almost eight years after the Peace Accords had been signed, apprehension regarding the reform of the doctrine had also subsided within the ranks of the military, and there was a better understanding among military officials and civilians about the difference between the conceptual and technical components of a doctrine, the mechanisms needed to achieve them, and the basic trust that would permit the establishment of a process of dialogue to bring them about. Shortly afterwards, a new dialogue was convened by the army to begin discussion on the still pending issue of a new military doctrine, to be based on the general principles approved in the White Paper: its third attempt to comply with this commitment. This third draft of the doctrine, presented in 2004, was more in line with the vision established in the AFPC.

From the perspective of those of us that worked on verifying compliance with this commitment, the elaboration of a document that finally reflected the consensus between civilians and military personnel regarding the political foundations of the 'military doctrine' was a direct consequence of the results of the POLSEDE and subsequent WSP-supported projects. With the understanding that building upon such foundations, other aspects could continue to be improved through ongoing consultation involving civil society, the United Nations Verifications Mission validated the 2004 document. MINUGUA also formally expressed its appreciation of the efforts carried out by civil society organizations specialized in security matters, as well as the willingness of the government to comply with the commitment made by the AFPC, recognizing explicitly that this convergence between the actors involved was the result of the important efforts made by WSP notably in the POLSEDE project.<sup>31</sup>

---

<sup>30</sup> To exemplify the challenging nature of the political context in which the project operated, it is worth mentioning that the outgoing Minister of National Defense, a representative of the hard-liner wing in the Army, surprisingly rejected the results obtained by POLSEDE, even though a strong military delegation participated throughout the process, and the President of the Republic had already validated the results. The situation expressed the fragile and precarious subordination of the military officers to civilian power in the context of transitional periods. The United Nations publicly denounced this situation, and the civilian authorities in Government, although unable to force the military brass into acceptance of its authority on this issue, continued to affirm their support for the process and its results. Finally, following the removal of General Méndez Estrada as Minister of National Defense, and after extensive contacts between the Project's Coordinating Team, the civilian authorities, the new military authorities and MINUGUA, the Army High Command reiterated its support for the POLSEDE recommendations, granting them official status as a basis for discussions of the White Paper on National Defense.

<sup>31</sup> Although the results included in the White Book were not the most desirable from the point of view of doctrine, from a procedural perspective they represented a clear advance in terms of the processes used for elaborating public policies, as an official document based on consensus between civil society and the Guatemalan government, establishing at the same time the basis for a periodic review with identical participatory methods. In the process of elaborating the new Military Doctrine, the procedural deficiencies observed in the earlier process were improved, which in turn permitted improved results from a substantive point of view. Guatemala today is one of a handful of countries in the world that submit the definition of the general parameters of defense policy to an open and inclusive process of analysis that brings together the State and Civil Society.

*d. The Re-deployment of Military Units.*

Another important commitment made in the AFPC agreement, as a proof of the effective transformation of the counterinsurgency strategy developed by the military during the armed conflict years, referred to the re-deployment of military units on the Guatemalan territory in a manner suited to a post-conflict situation. By 1999 however, this process that had begun in 1996 with the demobilization of some units, had reached a standstill. In spite of continuous requests by MINUGUA to advance the conceptualization of a different deployment in compliance with the new role for the military established in the Peace Accords, the National Defense Ministry did not present a plan for re-distribution of its military units in accordance with the country's new defense needs, focusing on the protection of national sovereignty from possible military threats by land, air and sea. Two years after the Peace Accords were signed, the Army had limited itself to dismantling some of military units without modifying substantially what remained a continuation of its counterinsurgency military presence, aimed at internal territorial control of the country. At the time, it was evident that the military authorities were using two different and contradictory discourses: the official discourse of the Military High Command, which was in favor of compliance with the Peace Accords and conversion of the institution, and on the other hand, a recalcitrant but unofficial discourse that rejected any substantial changes. The latter used as pretext the supposed invalidation of the Peace Accords as a result of the rejection in a popular referendum of the Constitutional reforms that stemmed from the Accords.<sup>32</sup>

Due to its strategic importance and highly technical nature, the issue of redeployment was not in the Agenda of POLSEDE. Still, the discussions held on other related issues had a clear effect on the ways in which the military came to regard the issue between 1999 and 2004. Discussions on issues like the Army's new role in a democracy, or on the security needs of the country, developed in the context of a participatory research process that was also an exercise of progressive trust-building, contributed to a gradual but substantial modification of the Army's positions. As the discussions on different aspects of civil-military relations progressed in different ways and by different means through this period, agreements and understandings reached in other aspects evidenced the need to change a deployment situation that was becoming progressively disconnected with other aspects of the debate.

By 2003 and 2004, the new military leadership, convinced of the need to transform the institution in order to allow the implementation of new functions, and as part of a policy of structural modernization of the Army, elaborated a plan that drastically modified the territorial presence of its military units throughout the country and which implied a strong reduction in military personnel. This new structural situation was greatly valued by the United Nations because it was in keeping with the spirit and letter of the Peace Accords. Once again within MINUGUA we recognized the long process of negotiation that led to this result, stemming from the initial and seemingly unrelated efforts of the POLSEDE project.

---

<sup>32</sup> Some key commitments of the Peace Accords referred to changes in the text of the Political Constitution of the Republic that required submission to and approval by popular referendum. In the case of security sector they included, among others, eliminating the institutional responsibility of the armed forces over public security issues and the obligation to appoint an active military officer of higher rank as Minister of Defense. After much delay and a decision by Congress to submit for popular consideration at the same time other proposed Constitutional changes that were not related to the Peace Accords, the Referendum took place in 1999, and failed to obtain sufficient support. The changes in the Constitutional text derived from the Peace Accords have therefore not been introduced.

We see then how, gradually and over the course of several years of sustained engagement, the military institution became convinced that in a democratic State, security matters in general and the elaboration and implementation of security policies in particular, are the political prerogative of civilian authorities, a process in which the military establishment is called to provide the technical elements required. In itself, facilitating such transformation in self-image is a very concrete contribution to implementing the principle of subordination of the Armed Forces to civilian rule, which the country's political-military culture had historically resisted.

The particular approach with its underlying principles that shaped the various projects, allowed the State and society to move beyond the letter and specifics of the commitments reached in the Peace Accords. The White Paper on Defense Policy, produced by the Ministry of National Defense for example, contains an appraisal of the strategic situation of the country and its defense needs. This was not a commitment specified in the AFPC agreements on 'military doctrine', but the need for a foundational 'defense policy' was identified in the course of the POLSEDE project. The project thus allowed the identification of a conceptual deficiency of the Accord that could have remained an obstacle for the process of demilitarization of the State structures that the AFPC called for.

It is necessary furthermore to emphasize that the impacts of these projects towards fulfilling the AFPC commitments continue even after the conclusion of the UN Mission in Guatemala in December 2004. Today, an unusual capacity for inter-sectoral work on democratic security exists in that country, that is a direct result of the development of technical capacities and political skills through the various WSP-supported initiatives.

*“Virtually every stakeholder interviewed indicated that WSP-I had played a critical and irreplaceable role (through the POLSEDE and POLSEC projects) in creating a ‘safe’ space for dialogue on civil-military relations, which had not previously existed in that society. This was seen to have evolved significantly over the course of the past four years into a ‘societal space’ rather than just a forum for a popular discourse on democratic security. This was illustrated by the prolific engagement of civil society organisations on security sector reform, as well as by the research being undertaken in universities and the courses being offered on the subject – all previously unthinkable in a society emerging from military rule.”<sup>33</sup>*

Making use of the technical resources available in the different public and private institutions of the country, the processes of interaction between society and the State for the analysis and formulation of public policy in this area continue: the advisory role of civil society representatives to the President through the Security Advisory Council; the Dialogue Roundtable for the establishment of the National Security System; the seminars, workshops and informal meetings organized by the Liaison Office in National Congress; the periodic meetings of the Guatemalan Network for Democratic Security; the continuation of dialogue between civilians and military personnel in the framework of the Defense Community, are all examples of internal dynamics constructed on the basis of new attitudes and new capacities, all of which were absent until a few years ago.<sup>34</sup> When MINUGUA was leaving the country for example,

---

<sup>33</sup> Daniels, Doug; Simpson, Graeme; y Vienings, Tracy; *“A Mid Term Review of WSP international”*; Report presented to WSP International’s Advisory Council meeting, Geneva, May 2004; pp 19.

<sup>34</sup> Sandino Asturias, part of the team of the Liaison Office in the National Congress, points out that the proposals contributed by civil society for the legislative debate are fundamental in staving off attempts by certain political sectors seeking to establish authoritarian security norms, contrary to the letter and spirit of the Peace Accords.

civil society organizations coordinated and supported by the FOSS project, were initiating or engaging with a series of legislative proposals on issues such as Civilian Intelligence, possession of Arms and Munitions and Private Security Companies, among others. The work of moving ahead with the overall democratization of security in Guatemala, is clearly in the hands of trained, motivated national actors, in terms that MINUGUA has described in the last paragraph of its Report:

*“Today it is evident that there are several civil society organizations committed and ever more specialized in security issues, that are active part of a “Defense Community”, an advanced concept not practiced even in more developed countries. Some individuals that are now part of the Governmental security organs come precisely from these institutions. At the moment MINUGUA is finishing its operations in Guatemala, there is a civil society that has been clearly strengthened in these issues. The establishment of the “Security Advisory Council”, and the support it gets from the project on “Strengthening of Civil Society Organizations” (FOSS) that gathers around it the majority of civil society organizations with expertise in security issues, represents a clear example of how is it possible to obtain positive, consensus results, between state officials and civil society. It is to be hoped that there will be continuity in the effort to promote the strengthening and specialization of civil society, so that they can continue developing proposals and thus collaborate with the State authorities.”<sup>35</sup>*

## **VII. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS: TRANSFERABILITY OF THE GUATEMALA EXPERIENCE.**

It is undeniable that security conditions are weak, fragile or deteriorating in many countries. Evidently, the weight of a poor or fragile security situation is greater in those countries that are emerging from internal or external conflict, whose societies are or remain divided and polarized, and whose political systems and cultures are in transition.

As we have seen, the successive WSP-supported projects, through their cumulative influence and impacts made possible substantial transformations in the Guatemalan political and policy frameworks related to democratic security. Concrete operational recommendations were developed that were taken into consideration by the Guatemalan political authorities, some of which have been translated into public policy. But equally important has been the development of new channels between society and the State, some official and some remaining non-official, to effectively link state institutions and society on concrete policy debates and policy decisions. We can say that a real ‘policy community’ on security issues has been developed thanks to the strengthening of the technical capacity and the development of collaborative attitudes within civil society and the State.

In doing so, the WSP-supported projects also complemented the verification efforts of MINUGUA thanks to the convergence of principles and interests, and the informal and formal coordination that was maintained over time. As indicated, the contribution of these projects in fulfilling the commitments of the AFPC and, as a consequence, the commitments of MINUGUA's mandate, have been concrete and significant. Moreover, its impacts continued beyond the presence of the Verification Mission, thanks to the level and quality of ownership by

---

<sup>35</sup> MINUGUA. *Informe Final. Asesoría de Fortalecimiento del Poder Civil*. November 15th. 2004. Paragraph 167. Our translation.

capable Guatemalan actors. There is reason to believe that this will continue to bear fruit and contribute positively in future.

It is probable that the results described in this report will remain unseen to a majority of Guatemalan citizens, including Guatemalan Government authorities, and national and international organizations that were not following the issue of security or were not directly involved. It is recommended therefore that these achievements and the process and principles that made them possible, should be widely disseminated within the UN and other international organizations, in virtue of its utility as reference for the design of processes elsewhere.

Indeed, this review of the experience in Guatemala should allow us to consider with a degree of optimism the possibility of implementing similar projects on security sector and democratic security issues in other post-conflict countries that face comparable challenges. Obviously, the social and political situations of each country differ. The design of a process-project comparable say to POLSEDE must evidently take into account the many contextual and situational variables, such as the social environment, causes of the conflict, characteristics of the population, organization of civil society, geographic environment, state structure and the willingness of recipients, among others. But whatever the specifics of the intervention design, implementation of core principles of the WSP-style approach should be seriously considered.

Where there is a UN peace-support or peacebuilding mission that seeks to strengthen local capacities, WSP International and the UN can usefully sit together to discuss strategic objectives and actions, but also the central importance of process and the principles that will guide it. In Guatemala, convergence and synergies were achieved between MINUGUA and the WSP-supported projects, thanks to a de-facto coordination even in the absence of a formal coordination framework. It is possible to consider more formal mechanisms to optimize the synergies between UN interventions and WSP International ones. But it is important to remember that the management of a process inevitably requires a degree of flexibility and adaptability, and that a major factor of success and sustainability in Guatemala has been that the coordinating team allowed the Guatemalan actors to take ownership of the process.

## GLOSSARY

<b>WSP</b>	WSP International
<b>POLSEDE</b>	Towards a Security Policy for Democracy
<b>FLACSO</b>	Latin American Social Sciences Faculty
<b>MINUGUA</b>	United Nations Mission for Guatemala
<b>POLSEC</b>	Towards a Citizen Security Policy
<b>CEH</b>	Historical Truth Commission
<b>AFPC</b>	Agreement on the Strengthening of Civilian Power and the Role of the Military in a Democracy
<b>URNG</b>	Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity
<b>PAC</b>	Civilian Self-Defense Patrols
<b>CVDC</b>	Voluntary Committees for Civil Defense
<b>AACC</b>	Army Civilian Affairs unit
<b>MDN</b>	Ministry of National Defense
<b>SAAS</b>	Presidential Secretariat for Administrative and Security Affairs
<b>SAE</b>	Presidential Secretariat for Strategic Analysis
<b>SEPAZ</b>	Presidential Secretariat for Peace
<b>MRE</b>	Ministry of Foreign Relations
<b>COPREDEH</b>	Presidential Human Rights Commission
<b>ASIES</b>	Association for Social Research and Studies
<b>CIEN</b>	Center for National Economic Investigations
<b>INCEP</b>	Central American Political Studies Institute
<b>IAPADES</b>	Teaching Institute for Sustainable Development
<b>IPES</b>	Political, Economic and Social Studies Institute
<b>IRIPAZ</b>	International Relations Research Institute for Peace
<b>CALDH</b>	Center for Human Rights Legal Action
<b>SEDEM</b>	Security in Democracy
<b>URL</b>	Rafael Landívar University
<b>USAC</b>	San Carlos University, Guatemala
<b>ICCPG</b>	Guatemalan Institute for Compared Studies in the Penal Sciences
<b>CEG</b>	Center for Guatemalan Studies
<b>CEUR</b>	Urban and Regional Studies Center, San Carlos University, Guatemala

## **Annex 1**

### **POLSEDE List of Participants**

#### **Governmental Institutions**

Secretariat for Presidential Security and Administration (SAAS)  
Secretariat for Strategic Analysis (SAE)  
Secretariat for Peace (SEPAZ)  
Ministry of National Defense (MDN)  
Ministry of the Interior  
Ministry of Foreign Relations (MRE)  
Presidential Commission for Human Rights (COPREDEH)

#### **Academic Centers and Civil Society Organizations**

Association for Social Research and Studies (ASIES)  
Center for National Economic Investigations (CIEN)  
Latin American Social Sciences Faculty (FLACSO)  
Myrna Mack Foundation  
Central American Political Studies Institute (INCEP)  
Teaching Institute for Sustainable Development (IEPADES)  
Political, Economic and Social Studies Institute (IPES)  
Research Institute for International Relations and Peace (IRIPAZ)  
Center for Human Rights Legal Action (CALDH)  
Security in Democracy (SEDEM)  
School of Political and Social Sciences, Rafael Landívar University (URL)  
Department of Political Sciences, San Carlos University (USAC)  
Urban and Regional Studies Center (CEUR), San Carlos University (USAC)  
Guatemalan Institute for Compared Studies in Penal Sciences (ICCPG)  
Center for Guatemalan Studies (CEG)

#### **Experts**

Dr. Gabriel Aguilera Peralta  
Gen. (r.) Julio Balconi Villaseñor  
Arq. Guillermo Pacheco Gaitán  
Gen. (r) Héctor Alejandro Gramajo  
Lt. Col. (r) Mauricio López Bonilla  
Col. (r) Mario Mérida  
Lic. Álvaro Pop  
Mr. Humberto Preti  
Dr. Héctor Rosada Granados  
Gen. (r) Otto Pérez Molina

## **Annex 2.**

### **POLSEDE**

#### **Final Documents.**

- Bases for the consideration of the military question.
- Society, State and Armed Forces in Guatemala at the beginning of the 21st Century.
- Security Concept and Agenda.
- Military Doctrine: Overview of constitutive aspects and recommendations for a new doctrinaire perspective.
- Intelligence Reform:
  - Contributions to the study of State Intelligence.
  - General Criteria for the Reform of the Intelligence System.
  - Guatemala: Foundations of the Intelligence System.
  - Organic Structure and Professional Career in the Intelligence System.
  - Democratic Controls over the Intelligence System.
  - Civilian Intelligence Sub-system in the Ministry of the Interior.
- The Security System in Guatemala.
- The Role of the Armed Forces in a Democratic Society.

## **Annex 3**

### **POLSEC.**

#### **List of Participants.**

##### **Governmental institutions**

Ministry of the Interior

- National Civil Police
- General Directorate of the Penitentiary System
- General Directorate for Immigration
- Office of Human Rights

Judicial Branch

Office of Public Prosecutor

Office of Public Defense

Office of the Human Rights Ombudsman

Secretariat for Peace

Supreme Court

Commission of Interior, Congress of the Republic

Inter-agency group for Modernization of the Justice System

National Commission for the Strengthening of Justice

##### **Academic Centers and Civil Society Organizations**

Association for Social Research and Studies (ASIES)

Alliance for the Prevention of Crime (APREDE)

Center for Human Rights Legal Action (CALDH)

Center for Guatemalan Studies (CEG)

Justice Centers

Lawyers and Notaries Association

Coordinating Committee of Agricultural, Commercial and Financial Associations (CACIF)

Mayan Defense

Latin American Social Sciences Faculty (FLACSO)

Relatives and Friends against Delinquency and Kidnapping (FADS)

Myrna Mack Foundation

Teaching Institute for Sustainable Development (IEPADES)

Democratic Influence (IDEM)

Guatemalan Institute for Compared Studies in the Penal Sciences (ICCPG)

Anguished Mothers

Security in Democracy (SEDEM)

Urban and Regional Studies Center (CEUR), San Carlos University (USAC)

Law and Social Sciences School, San Carlos University (USAC)

Rafael Landivar University (URL)

Rural University (UR)

## **Annex 4**

### **POLSEC**

#### **Final Documents**

- Proposal for the reorganization of the Ministry of the Interior
- Proposal for the establishment of a Training Academy for the Security Sector
- Recommendations for the Strengthening of the Institutional Framework for Citizen Security
- Proposal of a model for Community Policing
- Proposal for the reorganization of the Office of the Public Prosecutor
- Proposal for the implementation of the Agreements signed between the National Civil Police and the Office of the Public Prosecutor
- Proposal for an Inter-institutional Agreement between the Ministry of the Interior, the Office of the Public Prosecutor, and the Judicial Branch, on the unification of research laboratories and coroner services

## Annex 5

### FOSS

#### I. Programme of Studies in Democratic Security

##### Projects 2003-2004 (subject and institution)

- Observatory of Civil-Military Relations. FLACSO
- Strengthening of civil-society participation in Parliamentary Oversight of Defense and Security Budgets. IEPADES
- Interethnic Relations in the Armed Forces. FLACSO
- Role of former paramilitaries in rural power structures. FLACSO
- State Mechanisms for Democratic Control of the Armed Forces. IDEM
- Towards a Preventive Security Model in the National Police. IEPADES
- Legislative Agenda of the Peace Accords on Democratic Security. ASIES
- Democratic Guidelines for the new Law of the Armed Forces and Legal Framework for the Military Function in the State. FMM
- Strengthening the influence of Social Networks for Democratic Security in Congress. CEG
- Crime Statistics at the local level: Huehuetenango and Coatepeque. ICCPG

#### II. Liaison Office with Congress

**Laws in which specialized civil society organizations, through the Liaison Office, have had a direct incidence, lobbying and providing technical support, organizing and participating in seminars, conferences, providing background documents, etc. 2004-2005**

- Law of the Penal System
- Law on Arms and Munitions
- Law on Private Security Services
- Law on Free Access to Information, Classification and de-Classification of Classifies State Information
- Law Against Youth Gangs
- Military Code
- Intelligence Law
- Law Against Organized Crime
- Law on the Direction for Civilian Intelligence
- Law creating the National Autonomous Institute on Forensic Sciences

### **III. Towards a National Security System**

#### **Participants in Roundtable 2005-2006**

##### **Government**

**Presidential Secretariat for Peace (SEPAZ)**  
**Presidential Secretariat for Strategic Analysis (SAE)**  
**Presidential Secretariat for Administrative and Security Issues (SAAS)**  
**Ministry of the Interior**  
**Ministry of National Defense**  
**Ministry of Foreign Relations**  
**Security Advisory Council (CAS)**  
**Judiciary Organ**  
**National Association of Municipalities (ANAM)**  
**Public Ministry ( National Prosecutor's Office)**  
**IDB project (SEPAZ)**

##### **Political Parties**

**Frente Republicano Guatemalteco**  
**Partido DIA**  
**Unión Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca**  
**ANN**

##### **Non-Governmental Organizations**

**Universidad Rafael Landívar**  
**Universidad de San Carlos de Guatemala**  
**Red Guatemalteca para la Seguridad Democrática**  
**Comunidad de Defensa**  
**Centro de Estudios de Guatemala**  
**Fundación Myrna Mack**  
**Fundación Nicky Cruz**  
**Madres Angustiadas**  
**FOSS**  
**ASIES**  
**SEDEM**  
**COPRE**  
**IÉPADES**  
**FADS**  
**APREDE**  
**GAM**