The Chiapas Rebellion: An Analysis According to the Structural Theory of Revolution

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The Chiapas rebellion is in process. Where the Zapatista Army of National Liberation, the Mexican people, and the Mexican state will take it is a matter of intense speculation for many observers. For us, that speculation can be reshaped into a social scientific prognosis thanks to the "structural theory of revolution." This theory has been applied retrospectively to the study of past revolutions in France, Russia, and China (Skocpol, 1979), Mexico (Goldfrank), Nicaragua, Cuba, and Grenada (Meeks). Our application of this theory differs in that we are studying an ongoing process and formulating a prognosis.

Many studies of NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) have enlightened us about its macro-economic impacts on production, trade, and economic development, though few have sensitized us to the socio-political impacts on specific population groupings within NAFTA member states. This study of the Chiapas rebellion reveals some of these socio-political impacts, in particular on the Chiapas peasantry.[1] It is not mere coincidence that the rebellion began on January 1, 1994, which also was the start of NAFTA. The new rules of the economic game under NAFTA reached deep into the Mexican cornucopia to the southern state of Chiapas. Among the poorest states in Mexico, the majority of the 3.2 million inhabitants of Chiapas are Maya Indians. They work primarily in agriculture, cultivating corn for the domestic market and coffee for export. In fact, Chiapas is the principal producer of both corn and coffee in Mexico, meaning that neither its political nor its economic role is negligible.

For at least two reasons, then, the Chiapas rebellion invites careful study. It offers two opportunities: first, to apply a theory of revolution to an ongoing process, and second, to observe some of the socio-political impacts of NAFTA. In this study we apply a theory of revolution to the Chiapas

rebellion and conclude with a prediction about the likelihood of a new Mexican revolution. The events and conditions analyzed occurred between January 1994 and May 1995.[2] The prediction is based on this period and the theory. In the conclusion we reconsider the prediction in the light of events and conditions since May 1995.

An Analysis of the Chiapas Rebellion within the Framework of the Structural Theory of Revolution

A. Peasant Rebellion[3]

According to the *structural theory of revolution* (Goldstone, 1986: 10-11), peasant rebellion contributes to revolution when (1) there are widely shared peasant grievances directed against a common enemy, (2) there is a high capacity of peasant organization, and (3) there is a high autonomy of peasant organization from the control of landowners.

In Chiapas the main grievances are about *land*, especially in relation to the poverty of the peasants deriving from limited access to land ownership, obstacles to converting land to new crops, and discriminatory agricultural policies. The main grievances are also about *political rights*, such as exclusion, lack of control over decision-making, lack of responsiveness of authorities, obstacles to self-rule, and police repression.

Land Grievances

One million people live from communal and *ejido* land, about 41 per cent of the population of Chiapas. Communal land belongs to the villages, dates from pre-colonial times, and is worked cooperatively. *Ejido* land belongs to the villages, is worked by individual families on designated plots, and comes from the expropriation of hacienda lands during the Mexican Revolution. The "social sector" depends on rainfed agriculture on land (half of which is classified as "good") to produce mainly *corn* and *coffee*. Altogether, 91 per cent of the Chiapas *ejidatarios* in 1990 produced corn (Harvey: 15). Conversion to new cash crops requires irrigation, farm machinery, and paved roads for access to markets. All of this requires infrastructure investment by the state and access to credit. The low percentage (20.4%) of peasants receiving credit in 1985-89 was nearly halved (12.7%) in 1990 (Harvey: 7).

New cash crops in the "private sector" (not of peasants) of commercial agriculture in Chiapas have boomed since 1982. These new crops include soy beans, peanuts, sorghum and tobacco. Their production more than doubled

every year since 1982 (Harvey: 7). Traditional exports in the private sector also expanded during this period: bananas, meats, cacao, sugar, and timber.

A first, expected distinction between those who participated in the rebellion and those who did not is between the "haves" and the "have-nots", here between the "private sector" and the "social sector".[4] Since the social sector includes many groups which did not participate actively in the rebellion, what further conditions (beyond being a have-not) are associated with the core support of the Zapatistas from the Lacandona rain forest?

(1) Commercialization of agriculture. The degree of commerialization of agriculture varies across regions of Chiapas. Two regions, the highlands and the Lacandona rain forest differ from the rest of Chiapas in their high commercialization of corn and coffee (that is, production of a surplus for the market in contrast to production for subsistence). In these two regions especially, the peasants' vulnerability to price fluctuations became a source of their grievances.

Turning to coffee first, since 1958 coffee producers have benefited from a state-run marketing board which provides credit and guarantees the purchase and export of coffee. After the Mexican debt crisis in 1982, this marketing board fell into disuse. In 1989, when the International Coffee Organization was unable to agree on production quotas, the world price for coffee fell by fifty per cent (Harvey: 10). At the same time, under the Salinas government there was high inflation (89.3 per cent from 1989 to 1993) which made farming inputs more expensive... and an increase in the exchange rate (about 50 per cent) which made coffee exports less competitive. All these conditions were cumulative: the loss of credit and marketing facilities, the drop in coffee prices and the volume of coffee exports, and the rising prices of farm inputs. The result among coffee producers was a "cycle of debt and poverty" (Harvey: 11). Between 1989 and 1993 thousands of coffee growers in Chiapas abandoned production.

The story of the maize producers differs only slightly from the coffee story. The difference is mainly in the price guarantees for corn. In the late 1980s, however, the rise in the guaranteed prices for corn producers fell far behind the rise in inflation and the rise in input costs. Then came the NAFTA negotiations! Under NAFTA, price supports for maize would be phased out, to be replaced by international prices. Also under NAFTA's free trade imperatives, tariffs and import quotas for corn imported into Mexico would be phased out (Harvey: 13). Given the much higher agricultural productivity in the United States and Canada, their low-priced corn exports to Mexico would out-compete the more expensive Chiapas corn. NAFTA represented a dark cloud on the horizon for the Chiapas maize producers. Given that about two-thirds of the Chiapas maize production is sold on the Mexican market

(not for subsistence), the lowering of local corn prices under NAFTA (Harvey: 14) will contribute to the "cycle of debt and poverty" we already noted among the coffee producers.

(2) Land ownership. While Chiapas peasants in general who are dependent upon commercialized agriculture share the grievances of the Zapatistas, what additional condition explains their core support from the Lacandona rainforest? That key condition appears to be the grievances over land ownership (Whitmeyer and Hopcroft: 520, 532; also see González Casanova: 137-40). Since the 1970s, the immigration to the Lacandona region has been impressive, consisting of landless Indians and peasants from the Chiapas highlands. For years these immigrants have been in conflict with affluent ranchers and plantation owners over land ownership (Whitmeyer and Hopcroft: 525). The Indian communities of the highlands, in contrast, generally already have long ago established titles to the land they cultivate. The distinctive reaction of the Lacandona region to the revised *ejido* law in 1992 stems from their condition of land ownership.

The most dramatic single catalyst for peasant rebellion was the Mexican government's passage of a new agrarian law (reforming Article 27 of the Constitution) taking effect in 1992. While the aims were laudable –to attract private investment in agriculture and to increase welfare and productivity (Harvey: 24)–, for the peasants it was one more grievance. Two key provisions of the agrarian law were targeted by peasants. The *ejido* peasants were given the right to purchase, sell, rent or use as collateral the *ejido* and communal lands. Given the indebtedness of the peasants, it was feared that this provision would lead to the reconcentration of land. The new law also gave landowners a year to sell off excess land (beyond legal limits), after which no further petitions for land redistribution would be allowed (Harvey: 24). This second provision dashed the hopes of thousands of Chiapas' peasants, especially in the Lacandona rainforest, where land was scarce and land claims had never been settled.

Political Rights Grievances[5]

Mexico's anti-poverty program, "Solidaridad", was designed to cushion the negative effects of NAFTA and other agricultural reforms such as those just mentioned affecting the producers of maize and coffee. The anti-poverty program deals with unemployment, malnutrition, illiteracy, and over-crowded housing (Harvey: 17). The program, however, does not address the marketing and production needs of the social sector which are among the root causes of poverty. Both its inadequate funding and its limited purposes make this program a source of economic grievance. This becomes a source of political grievance because these limited funds are disbursed largely by the

Chiapas state governor and by local political bosses and municipal presidents loyal to the PRI (Party of the Institutionalized Revolution). The political manipulation of anti-poverty funds contributes directly to the peasant grievances in Chiapas (Harvey: 18). For an example of manipulation, we may look at the governor's misuse of anti-poverty (Solidaridad) loan funds. These interest-free loans to farmers, once repaid, were to be recycled to the same communities in the form of welfare projects. Those communities with the highest loan repayments, however, did not receive their share of welfare project funds because of the governor's favoritism toward his own political allies in the PRI among municipal presidents (Harvey: 19).

So far we have examined the grievances of peasants working on communal and *ejido* lands, more or less as small-holders. What about the grievances of the landless peasants who work as wage labor on the coffee and sugar plantations? During the 1970s and 1980s there were many strikes by the plantation workers against the landowners for better wages, better working conditions, and labor rights. When these went unheeded, the workers began land invasions on plantation lands and demanded the redistribution of the land to the workers (Harvey: 20). The Chiapas government's response was three-fold. First, it settled some land claims by redistributing lands to workers after expropriating and compensating the landowners. In many cases, the landowners invented the land invasions on lands they no longer wished to keep in order to receive the compensation. In other cases, the government made the land of cattle ranchers exempt from expropriation. When the government did settle land claims, it tended to favor those peasant organizations affiliated with the PRI over the independent peasant organizations (Harvey: 22). The second response of the government was to leave many land claims unresolved. And the third response was repression.[6] The Chiapas state police and the landowners' paramilitary "white guards" are implicated in attacks on peasant demonstrations, arrests and assassinations of peasant leaders, and forced evictions of land invaders (Harvey: 22).

To summarize the peasant grievances, they focus on land and political rights. These grievances are *widely shared* among the peasants, especially because so many are engaged in the production of maize and coffee. The *common enemy* is readily identifiable as the PRI-dominated Mexican state, which is held responsible for the harmful agricultural policies (including the new agrarian law), for the harmful NAFTA policies, for the inadequate anti-poverty program, and for the actions of the PRI-dominated Chiapas government: its political manipulation of loan funds, its support of the ranchers and plantation owners in the settlement of land claims by rural wage labor and peasants, and finally because of its police repression. Chiapas

ranchers and plantation owners are the *immediate enemy*, but the Mexican state is held ultimately responsible.

There have been three phases in the reponses by peasants to their grievances: (1) immigration to the rainforest region of Chiapas in search of land and employment, (2) political organization of peasants to defend their rights and to have a more advantageous insertion in the market, and (3) peasant rebellion (Harvey: 4). We will look at all three in the region in which the Zapatista rebellion began.

Capacity for Peasant Organization

According to our theory, peasant rebellions contribute to revolution when the peasantry has a high capacity for organization (Skocpol, 1986: 78-79). Since the armed rebellion is centered in the region of Chiapas called the Lacandona rainforest or *selva*, we will describe the peasant organization there. Beginning in the 1930s, there has been extensive colonization of the Lacandona forest by peasants who lost their land to local elites and by former plantation workers. The migrants to the *selva* were Maya Indian peasants and numbered over 100,000 already by 1970 (Harvey: 27).

Church organizations. For decades, both Protestant and Catholic missionaries have been working in this region. The Catholic Diocese of San Cristóbal is especially important in its support for the "preferential option for the poor," the popular Church movement starting in the late 1960s as part of liberation theology (Harvey: 27; González Casanova: 133-4). At the request of the Chiapas government, the Church organized community groups in the 1970s to discuss such issues as land tenure, marketing, education and health, in preparation for a Congress to be held in 1974 to celebrate 500 years after the death of Fray Bartolomé de las Casas. Within these groups, political learning took place, offering a new perspective on the causes of poverty and injustice (Harvey: 28). These grass-roots community organizations were autonomous, not at all affiliated with the PRI. When the Mexican government promoted the formation of *ejido* unions in Chiapas, the unions from the *selva* had an autonomous base.

Maoist "Politics of the People" organization. Formed during the 1968 student movement in Mexico City, a nation-wide Maoist movement has been attempting to form a mass base for a non-violent struggle for socialism (Harvey: 29; see also González Casanova: 135-7). While it does not promote armed struggle, it has worked with the autonomous *ejido* unions in the Lacandona region to assert their land rights.

The *organizational capacity* of the *ejido* unions has grown over the last twenty years. It can act rapidly as witnessed, for example, in their rapid mobilization of over 12,000 peasants in a protest demonstration in 1985

(Harvey: 31). By early 1993 a more radicalized peasant alliance in the region, the National Independent Peasant Alliance - Emiliano Zapata, considered the legal solutions to its agrarian demands to be hopelessly blocked. It went underground, presumably to train for armed rebellion (Harvey: 32-3). This does not mark the start of preparation for which may have begun four years earlier (see Whitmeyer and Hopcroft: 522).

B. Marginal Elites - Dissident Political Movements

According to the *structural theory of revolution*, marginal elites and dissident political movements are necessary for revolution (Skocpol, 1986: 84-6). They provide staying power for what would otherwise remain a local peasant rebellion with local aims. Marginal elites offer an ideology and a program which can orient the peasants rebels toward national goals. Dissident movements can provide allies for peasant rebels.[7]

In our analysis of the Zapatista rebellion, we will describe how its leadership has provided a national orientation and how the rebels have found allies in opposition political parties and in dissident movements outside of Chiapas.

The Zapatistas, officially known as the "Zapatista Army of National Liberation" (EZLN), is led by a member of a *marginal elite*. Though the identity of the rebels is hidden behind their knitted ski masks, some things are clear about Subcomandante Marcos, their leader. He is not a Maya Indian but may be from Chiapas originally.[8] Journalists who have interviewed Marcos believe that he is from northern Mexico, is possibly a former medical student or priest, and has lived in the United States. According to one interview, he came with five comrades to Chiapas in 1983 with the intention of starting a guerrilla movement (Guillermoprieto, 1995: 35, 38).

His many interviews, his clandestine radio messages, and his share of the Zapatista communiqués, all present an *ideology* and a program which make this peasant rebellion national in scope. On January 1, 1994, the Zapatistas declared war on the Mexican state and demanded the resignation of President Salinas de Gortari. Beyond this declaration was a general program for change. This program includes: agrarian reform laws, health centers, rural services (roads, electricity, safe water), schools, reforms of the justice system, free and democratic elections, and a "democratic government of transition" (Guillermoprieto, 1995: 39-40). Here are excerpts from the January 1, 1994 Zapatista declaration:

> Brother Mexicans: We are the product of five hundred years of struggle... we are dying of hunger and curable diseases... we

> have nothing, absolutely nothing; no roof worthy of the name, nor land, nor work, nor health, nor education; without the right to elect our authorities freely and democratically; without independence from foreigners, without peace or justice for ourselves and for our children. Today we say ENOUGH! (Guillermoprieto, 1995: 34).

This message was not lost on the forty per cent of the Mexican population which is under the poverty line, nor was it lost on certain dissident political movements outside Chiapas.[9] A leftist-leaning, national political party, called the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD), appears to be the inheritor of the populist tendencies in Mexican politics. Its leader is in fact the son of a former President, Lázaro Cárdenas, who is credited with the most far-reaching land redistribution since the PRI was formed in 1929. This party's constituency includes urban workers, rural poor, and intellectuals (Guillermoprieto, 1995: 41). The PRD is committed to non-violence in pursuit of a social democratic platform. The PRD claims that electoral fraud prevented it from winning the presidency in 1988 and the governorship in Chiapas in 1994. In May 1994 the PRD leadership met with the Zapatista leadership and declared their solidarity and their sharing of many objectives, without establishing an alliance.[10]

During August 1994, in the heart of Zapatista territory, a National Democratic Convention was held. This was a gathering of 8,000 delegates from all over Mexico for the purpose of forming a nation-wide movement of political reform. Though loosely organized, this Congress links the Zapatista rebellion to a nation-wide *dissident movement*, announced on the first anniversary of the rebellion as "the Movement of National Liberation." The leader of the PRD, Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, at a mass rally in the Zócalo of Mexico City in February of 1995, emerged as the leader of a political movement in opposition to the PRI party-state and leader of the movement for democratization in what appeared to be a tacit alliance with the Zapatistas.[11]

C. World Context

According to the *structural theory of revolution*, the chances of a peasant rebellion, supported by dissident political movements, to bring about the collapse of the state depends on a favorable *world context* (Goldfrank, 1979: 148-51). Can the Zapatistas count on the non-interference of foreign forces normally hostile to rebellion? U.S. military intervention in Latin America has a long history, though this is extremely unlikely in Mexico. What, then, is the

foreign support for the Zapatistas? Numerous human rights groups with international affiliations have already protested against the Mexican army's violation of human rights during the first weeks of January 1994. The presence of foreign journalists in Zapatista territory further constrains the army repression of the rebels. The key role of the Bishop Ruiz of San Cristóbal, Chiapas, as mediator in the peace talks makes the Church vigilance quite evident. Though no foreign groups are giving material support to the Zapatistas, the *world context* appears to be favorable to the rebellion.

D. Crisis of the State

According to the *structural theory of revolution*, the collapse of the state depends finally on whether the state has the capacity to cope with crisis (Skocpol, 1986: 72-5). In order to assess the state's capacity, we will describe how the Mexican state is coping with both a *political* and an *economic crisis*.

The Political Crisis[12]

Nineteen ninety-four was the year of presidential elections in Mexico. The Zapatista rebellion served to focus attention on many abuses of power by the ruling party, the PRI, at all levels of its administration. In March 1994 the assassination of Luis Donaldo Colosio, the PRI presidential candidate, shocked everyone. That Colosio was considered a reformer raised suspicions about a power struggle between reformers and hardliners within the PRI (Gómez: 24-5). The assassination of the Secretary General of the PRI in September further supported these suspicions (Gómez: 40). In December, when the newly elected President, Ernesto Zedillo, took office, he imposed the elected PRI candidate for the governship of Chiapas, despite the objections by the Zapatistas that his election was fraudulent. The Zapatistas then broke off peace negotiations and declared a state of emergency. In February of 1995 President Zedillo claimed that the Zapatistas had terrorist ambitions in many Mexican cities and sent the army to Chiapas to arrest Subcomandante Marcos. In Mexico City, 100,000 people protested in the streets in support of the Zapatistas. A day later, the troops were withdrawn. And that day, in the State of Jalisco, the conservative opposition party, the National Action Party (PAN), won the governorship, a very rare event (Gómez: 46-7). President Zedillo then forced the resignation of the Chiapas PRI governor, clearing the way for a new election. Also in February, the government prosecutor reported a cover-up in the investigation of the Colosio assassination which involved high-ranking members of the PRI. A day later, Raúl Salinas de Gortari, the brother of the ex-President, was arrested for masterminding the assassination of the PRI Secretary General in September of 1994 (Gómez:

47).[13] All of these events contributed to a general political crisis of the Mexican state and its ruling party, the PRI. The Zapatista rebellion, in this context, was not a serious challenge to the military power of the Mexican army, whose loyalty to the state is unquestioned. Rather, given the political crisis, could the state accept the political cost of attacking the Zapatista rebels? (Guillermoprieto: 39). And if it did not, would other peasant uprisings occur elsewhere in Mexico?

The Economic Crisis

In December 1994, just after President Zedillo assumed office, the economic crisis began.[14] Uncertainty about the state's ability to deal with the Mexican debt load led foreign investors to sell holdings in the Mexican stock market. The stock market decline led to a severe devaluation (long overdue) of the peso which caused more uncertainty about Mexico's ability to pay its foreign debt. Declining foreign investment and capital flight reduced foreign reserves to $6 billion at year's end from $30 billion in January.[15] By February 1995, President Clinton had put together a $70 billion bail-out package consisting of loan guarantees and $28 billion in loans, with the cooperation of major industrial nations, including Canada. This shows a foreign influence unfavorable to revolution, since this foreign aid supports the state in an economic crisis which was triggered by the Zapatista rebellion. The peso continued to fall as Zedillo announced an austerity program including price rises for public utilities, cuts in spending for public projects offset only by a small rise in the minimum wage and by a job creation program (Morrison, 1995b: 21; see also Alvarez Bejar: 284-6). This year was to be one of stagflation and economic sacrifice, falling hardest on Mexico's salaried and poor (Gómez: 49).[16]

The structural adjustment policies implemented to enable foreign debt repayments have raised questions about Mexican sovereignty. The major economic policies which form the adjustment program were decided abroad by creditors rather than by Mexican authorities. Monetary policy, especially interest rates, were set as a function of U.S. rates in order to stabilize the peso and to facilitate debt repayment. The loss of sovereignty in economic and monetary policy has repercussions for territorial sovereignty. The Zedillo government has been under pressure from the IMF and the U.S. to reassert its control over Zapatista territory, a challenge to its territorial sovereignty. This pressure derives from the need to secure the PEMEX oil revenue guarantees for the foreign loans, since many of the PEMEX oil properties are in Chiapas.[17] The renewed military campaign against the Zapatistas in early February 1995 closed the vicious circle of events both in the political and economic crises.

E. Prediction: The Collapse of the Mexican State

The Mexican state's legitimacy rests on two pillars: its capacity for economic performance and its capacity to embody the political ideals of the Mexican revolution. Because both of these capacities have been put in question, so has the legitimacy of the Mexican state.[18] On the basis of the *structural theory of revolution*, what prediction could be made about the collapse of the Mexican state?[19]

(1) The Zapatista rebels are highly organized and largely autonomous in their zone of operations, and their common grievances focus on a common enemy.
(2) The dissident political movements give staying power to the Zapatista rebellion by transforming their local grievances into a national program.
(3) The Zapatista rebellion could spark more peasant uprisings if the state remains reluctant to repress it by force or to defuse it by massive concessions to the Chiapas peasants.
(4) The Mexican state has a low capacity to cope with the current economic and political crises without endangering its economic sovereignty.[20]
(5) The current world context is ambiguous: it has favored the Zapatista rebellion by keeping watch over human rights violations AND at the same time it has supported the state through the massive bail-out package.

According to the *structural theory of revolution*, most of the conditions were present in 1995 for the collapse of the Mexican state. Any of the following conditions might be sufficient for the collapse of the state and the beginning of a new revolution: another major political scandal within the PRI, a further major deterioration of national economic conditions for which the state could be held accountable, and unsuccessful attempts by the state to repress the Chiapas rebellion, thereby casting further doubt on the state's capacity and legitimacy.

Conclusion

The Chiapas rebellion is still in process. The conditions identified by the *structural theory of revolution* are dynamic, not static. New events shift the balance of these conditions either to increase or decrease the likelihood of the collapse of the Mexican state. In this conclusion we will examine how certain events since May 1, 1995 seem to have altered the balance of conditions, especially those affecting the crisis of the state.

The Mexican state's legitimacy is essential to its ability to endure economic and political crises. This legitimacy in turn depends on the state's economic performance and its embodiment of the political ideals of the Mexican revolution. Recent events bear especially on the latter, both positively and negatively.

The state's legitimacy suffered as a consequence of several events. In November 1995, Raúl Salinas de Gortari, brother of ex-President Carlos Salinas, was convicted of masterminding the assassination of Ruiz-Massieu, Secretary General of the PRI. In the same month, the sister-in-law of Raúl Salinas de Gortari was arrested in Switzerland while attempting to withdraw $115 million from a bank account, presumably money related to narco-trafficking by Raúl Salinas. Carlos Salinas de Gortari, ex-president of Mexico, went into voluntary exile in Ireland in 1997.

The state's legitimacy may have improved as a result of some unexpected electoral events since May 1995. These events include the PAN electoral victory for mayor of Guadalajara, Mexico's second largest city. In 1997 Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, leader of the PRD, was elected mayor of Mexico City, often in the past a stepping stone to the Mexican presidency. In elections for the national assembly in 1997, the PRI lost its absolute majority in the lower chamber to the PRD, PAN, and two other opposition parties. In 1997 the PAN won three of the six governorships being contested. Despite weakening the PRI's hold on power, these fraud-free electoral victories for opposition parties restore confidence in the democratic commitment of the state. More than ever, the PRI party-state appears to the general public, outside of Chiapas, to embody the democratic ideals of the Mexican revolution.[21]

Two further events within Chiapas have strengthened the Mexican state's legitimacy, and consequently its ability to contend with the political crisis. In Chiapas, the PRI-dominated state government and PRI-affiliated municipalities are allied with large landowners in opposition to electoral reform (for open and honest elections). As a result of their obstinacy, "parallel governments" have been formed in Chiapas. The PRD candidate for governor in 1994, Amado Avedano, having lost in a fraudulent election, later formed a parallel government with a large backing from autonomous peasant unions (Kampwirth: 16; Avedano: 227). Within Zapatista-held territory, a number of autonomous municipalities have been formed, taking on all the functions of local government (Stahler-Sholk: 13). The San Andrés Accords signed in February, 1996 by the Zedillo government and the EZLN called for new agrarian reform, political reform, and increased autonomy for indigenous communities (Kampwirth: 17).[22] These Accords reinforce the legitimacy of the Mexican state, seen as the protector of democratic ideals.

A final event to be examined, further strengthening the state's legitimacy, also took place in Chiapas. The paramilitary group that massacred 45 villagers of Acteal in Chiapas on December 22, 1997 acted with the complicity of the PRI-dominated Chiapas government (Hernández Navarro: 7). This village was targeted because of its support for the Zapatistas and its autonomous municipality (Hernández Navarro: 10). Even though some Chiapas PRI officials and some paramilitaries have been called to account for the massacre, the Mexican state has not been implicated (Kampwirth: 19). The Zedillo government ordered additional army troops into Chiapas to protect (pro-Zapatista) villages from further paramilitary attacks (Stahler-Sholk: 12).[23] These actions once more serve to bolster the legitimacy of the Mexican state, seen as guarantor of civil liberties.

In conclusion, recent events have altered the balance of conditions identified by the *structural theory of revolution* as promoting or inhibiting the collapse of the Mexican state. The balance now favors the legitimacy of the Mexican state, temporarily prolonging its ability to cope with the political and economic crises.

Appendix: A Chronology of Events in the Rebellion (1994-1995)

The events described here begin on January 1, 1994 and end on May 1, 1995. The predictions about the likelihood of a revolution, ventured in this study, are founded on this period.

1 January 1994. Timed to coincide with the start of NAFTA, in an armed uprising of over 3,000 Indians in Chiapas, the Zapatista Army of National Liberation declares war on the government and federal army and demands the resignation of President Salinas de Gortari. The movement calls for "jobs, land, housing, food, health, education, independence, freedom, democracy, justice and peace" (Harvey: 1-2). They declare that the NAFTA agreement is a "death sentence" for the Chiapas peasants. The Zapatista rebels carry out an assault on six large towns in Chiapas. In most, the federal army repels them.

1st week of January. In Mexico City and in other major cities, thousands of people protest against the federal army attacks on the Zapatistas.

12 January. 100,000 people protest in Mexico City and demand a peace process (Gómez: 19). A cease-fire is ordered by President Salinas and a negotiation commission is established. Casualty count: 9 Zapatistas dead, 12 lost in action, 27 army dead, possibly 30 more.[24]

20 February. Peace talks begin at San Cristóbal, Chiapas.

Bishop Ruiz (mediator), Camacho Solís (of the federal government),

Subcomandante Marcos, Comandante Ramona, and 18 Zapatistas of command. The government makes peace offers.

January-June. New land invasions in Chiapas by peasants; 340 private farms seized. The EZLN communiques provoke peasants to occupy lands in Veracruz, Tabasco, Oaxaca and Guerrero (Gómez: 21).

14 April. Peasant organizations (CEOIC) negotiate with the Chiapas government over land claims.

10 June. The Zapatistas, in their second declaration from the jungle, announce the results of their popular vote in Zapatista territory: a rejection of the government's peace offers made in February. Also, they convoke a National Democratic Convention to be held in August (Gómez: 29-30).

Early August. National Democratic Convention held in Zapatista territory, Chiapas: 8,000 delegates attend from all over Mexico to formulate a new constitution and a government of transition (Gómez: 30-1).

21 August. National presidential elections and for state governorships. Zapatistas refuse to accept the election of the PRI (Party of the Institutionalized Revolution) candidate for governor of Chiapas, claiming electoral fraud.

10 October. Communications between Zapatistas and the government are broken off.

November. Ernesto Zedillo, newly elected President, declares his intention to negotiate peace with the Zapatistas.

1 December. Zedillo takes office. Zedillo imposes the PRI-elected governor of Chiapas. Zapatistas immediately break off peace negotiations and declare a state of emergency. At the end of the week, Subcomandante Marcos sends a note to Zedillo: "Welcome to the nightmare."

19 December. The Zapatistas retake key towns in Chiapas and block highways outside of their own territory. These actions of the EZLN provoke a financial crisis (Gómez: 41). Investor uncertainty brings a spectacular fall in the stock market which triggers an overdue Mexican peso devaluation of 12.7 per cent. Over the next two weeks, the peso floats and falls 35 per cent. This wipes out $10 billion in foreign investment. Angry foreign investors withdraw over $8 billion and the stock market falls. The economic crisis deepens as investors are uncertain about Mexico's ability to pay its short-term foreign debt (Corchado: H7; McDonald, Caragata, and Morrison: 28-30).

10 January 1995. More peasant uprisings in Chiapas.

9 February. Zedillo claims to have found an arms cache in Veracruz belonging to the Zapatistas. He claims that they are not Indians and that their leaders are marxist bandits with plans for terrorism in Mexican cities. He also claims to have found out the identity of Marcos. Zedillo orders army troops to arrest Marcos, the five other leaders and to retake the towns in rebel-hands

Chiapas with the force of tanks, 110 mobile artillery units, and 2500 soldiers (Gómez: 44-5).

13 February. Some 100,000 demonstrators in Mexico City protest in support of the Zapatistas (Gómez: 46) and demand Zedillo's resignation. Claims of Marcos' identity are said to be false.

14 February. Zedillo calls for renewed peace negotiations. Zedillo brings about the resignation of the Chiapas governor, allowing for new elections (Gómez: 46).

14 March. Zedillo orders the withdrawal of federal troops from the Zapatista territory. The Lower Chamber of the Mexican Congress approves a law for negotiation with the Zapatistas: this includes an amnesty if arms are deposited, withdrawal of federal troops, and an end of arrest warrant for Zapatista leaders.

1 May. Following months of unpopular, severe economic measures, 200,000 people assemble at the Zócalo, the main plaza of Mexico City, to protest against Zedillo and to demand his resignation (Gómez: 53).

NOTES

1. Subcomandante Marcos calls public attention to the impacts on Chiapas of globalization and the neoliberal economic model of Salinas (Marcos: 220-1).
2. The first version of this paper was written as a lecture delivered in April 1995 and based on knowledge of the events then available. We have not altered those predictions in the present version. We have, however, made use of information and scholarly writings which later became available in order to further document and support the original analysis.
3. The peasant grievances date back to the 1950s and derive from shifts in government policies as well as world economic conjunctures. For a detailed historical analysis which concurs with our summary description, see Collier (1994).
4. Whitmeyer and Hopcroft state: "...we find support for the contention that rebellion is fomented among landless or land-poor squatters and laborers..." (535). These authors also believe that the Zapatistas were not among the most backward or poorest peasants of Chiapas (519).
5. In a sense, all the political grievances could be subsumed under the demand for democracy (see González Casanova: 145-8).
6. For a fuller description of the landowners' and police repression of Indians, see González Casanova (145-7).
7. The support of peasant groups within Chiapas for the Zapatistas deserves to be mentioned. Outside of the Lacandona region, the chief support came from Indian *municipios* of the highlands around the city of San Cristóbal. These peasants seized the opportunity to protest against local corruption and to remove municipal mayors from office (Whitmeyer and Hopcroft: 525). Even though the EZLN had armed engagements in the highlands, the participants were residents of the Lacandona rain forest (Whitmeyer and Hopcroft: 519).
8. For a detailed description of Marcos by journalists who claim to have confirmed his identity, see de la Grange and Rico (1998).
9. The demands of peasants in the neighboring State of Tabasco have only met resistance by the state government. Electoral fraud continues to plague the efforts of the peasant movement

under the leadership of López Obrador, defeated PRD candidate for the governorship in 1988. The Zapatistas may find allies here (see Taibo: 161-72). The Indian women's rights groups formed early in the Zapatista rebellion and presented their own declaration of women's rights. Women from all over Mexico joined in their meeting in Tuxtla, cutting across class, ethnic, and regional lines to prepare for a National Convention of Women (Falquet: 127).

10. For details on the meeting in Zapatista territory between the PRD leadership and the EZLN, see Aguilar Zinser (183-205).
11. Aguilar Zinser (204-5).
12. Luis Gómez refers to a crisis of the regime in the following terms: the inability of the state to represent society and of the party system to translate popular demands coming from social movements, problems in the state-party especially due to links with narcotrafficking, the deterioration of its corporatist structure, the weakening of presidential power, and PRI leadership in-fighting (Gómez: 13).
13. It was later determined that the assassination of Ruiz-Massieu, Secretary General of the PRI, and the cover-up involved directly his family, including high-ranking PRI officials, and was ordered by Raúl Salinas de Gortari, the brother of the ex-President (Gómez: 48).
14. For a fuller description see Alvarez Bejar (279-82). The background to the economic crisis, long in preparation and linked to NAFTA negotiations, is well documented by Castaneda (245-71).
15. Alvarez Bejar (279-80).
16. Other dire economic consequences of the government's policies to respond to the crisis: unemployment of public service workers, failures of small firms (see Gómez: 53).
17. Alvarez Bejar (291-2).
18. Meyer, a Mexican political scientist, approaches the legitimacy of the Mexican state in a slightly different manner. He singles out sovereignty as the central issue and considers this to be founded internally on democratic processes and externally on the priority of Mexican national interests over foreign interests. Internally, state sovereignty is weak because its source, the popular will, is incarnated neither in the presidency nor in the congress, due to undemocratic electoral processes. External sovereignty is weak because of the foreign control over national economic policies: high interest rates, budget cuts, and use of PEMEX revenues as loan guaranties, all in the negotiation of the IMF and U.S. bail-out package (Meyer: 93-5).
19. Gómez issues a caution about predicting the collapse of the Mexican state. He warns against confusing the crisis of a regime with the end of a regime, since the party-state may well have the capacity to recompose itself (Gómez: 55).
20. Castaneda concludes also that the economic and political crises by the spring of 1995 would not exclude the collapse of the state, unless drastic reforms of the political system were undertaken (Castaneda: 270).
21. According to Rueschemeyer and Stephens (1992: 199), Mexico has never had a democracy. Their criteria for democracy are: "first, regular, free and fair elections of representatives with universal and equal suffrage, second, responsibility of the state apparatus to the elected parliament..., and third, the freedoms of expression and association as well as the protection of individual rights against arbitrary state action" (1992: 43). A "restricted democracy" is a regime which meets these three criteria to a limited extent. Mexico, however, does not even qualify as a "restricted democracy" but falls, instead, into the category of "corporatist authoritarian" regimes (1992: 161).
22. On January 11, 1997 the Zapatistas rejected the accord, stating that President Zedillo had made unacceptable modifications to the original document (Kampwirth: 17).
23. This increased military presence may serve to isolate the Zapatista army from its source of popular support and supplies. There is speculation that this may be in preparation for a military solution to the Chiapas rebellion which appears to be taking the form of low-intensity warfare (Stahler-Sholk: 11).
24. Gómez (18) counts some 200 dead, including combatants on both sides and civilians.

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