

**STRATEGY
RESEARCH
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NATIONAL AGENDA 2025 OF EL SALVADOR

BY

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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

National Agenda 2025 of El Salvador

by

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U.S. Army War College
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ABSTRACT

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A democracy needs to engage its population in the process of establishing a National Agenda. The purpose of this paper is to survey national objectives, instruments of power, and national interests that would contribute to a National Agenda 2025 of El Salvador. This paper provides a strategy to increase the knowledge and interest of the general population to engage their participation in their Salvadorian political process. El Salvador has been characterized by extensive political, economic, and social crisis while being categorized as a country of authoritarian democracy, with significant problems in governing. A National Agenda will allow it to reach the well being and prosperity it is capable of attaining for its people. Today it is a country with a stable future. As a consequence of a responsible, politically mature population, and because the nation has been challenging the paradigm of its past, its democracy has been strengthened. Today, after achieving the peace with the Chapultepec Accord, a National Agenda must be achieved in order to generate the necessary conditions which will allow this country to prosper. We can increase the availability of the national resources, solve national problems, promote prosperity, and face new challenges within a real democratic environment.

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NATIONAL BACKGROUND

The history of El Salvador is too difficult to be explained in a few lines. This country, as much as any other nation state of Latin America, has been trying to achieve sustainable development within an environment of security. However, this political precondition has been difficult to achieve due to the lack of national consensus on a National Strategy. It has been especially hard to achieve the national objectives proposed by the political leaders.

The history of El Salvador has been characterized by frequent political, economic, and social crises, which has extensively damaged the Salvadoran society.¹ The history previously created incipient democratic systems, which were too weak, fragile, and non-practicable. Also, we lacked a consistent, strong, and comprehensive national document such as a "National Agenda" which expresses the will of the society and supports the continuity of the political programs.

The National Crisis

The Salvadorian crisis has been caused by a lack of a political leadership. The political leaders had difficulty cultivating the willingness and aspirations of the society. The nation had expectations of achieving well being, prosperity, internal security, sustainable development, and national security through the implementation of a national security strategy. However, the political effort did not provide the results

expected by the administrations. As a matter of fact, due this political vulnerability, many more problems were increasing daily.

With this in mind, the former administrations developed their political plans, but those efforts were not effective, because they were not legitimized by the people. Their policies benefited only a specific sector of the population and satisfied special interest groups. The result incited crises inside those administrations where political objectives did not relate to the need of the governed society. These previous administrations had some political intentions to govern under the democracy umbrella, live in social harmony, and improve government efficiency; however, those plans were ineffective because they were attempted over too short a time span. Allowing sufficient time to achieve the National Agenda is critical.

Initial steps towards greater democracy were made during the earlier administrations of the 20th Century. Their purpose was to improve democracy and facilitate the achievement of national objectives. For instance: a Welfare Plan was established during General Carlos Humberto Romero's Administration (1978); The Armed Forces Proclamation allowed the Democrat Christian Party (DCP) to participate with the Revolutionary Government Board (1979); The Road to the Peace was established during the Jose Napoleon Duarte Administration (1984); The National Rescue Plan was established during the Alfredo Cristiany Administration (1989); Armando

Calderon Sol began to make a serious political effort to improve the well being of everyone in the San Andres Pact (1994); and finally in 1997 and 1998, the Calderon Sol Administration made progress toward democracy by trying to build a national consensus on the national interest of El Salvador.

Considering this framework, it is necessary to look for specific solutions which provide answers to the national problems. The implementation of Chapultepec Accords on January 16, 1992 was the beginning of the new era for the country's institutions. It declared that the formulation and implementation of an authentic National Agenda was imperative to providing the conditions necessary to govern within a legitimate democracy. It is important to discuss this National Agenda.

Due to the tremendous role it plays in the National Agenda, it is also necessary to discuss the capacity of instruments of power. Those instruments were previously too weak to provide support the former administrations. As a matter of fact, this vulnerability often occurred due to the lack of political responsibility, inefficiencies, inconsistency of the national security strategy, and by the lack of a political constitution assuring the prosperity and the well being of the people.

The previous irresponsible political attitudes did not allow us to achieve the national objectives. Instead of achieving the well being of the people, it caused many political, economical and social crises. Those crises facilitated the participation of

foreign interference on domestic issues and reduced the capacity of the instruments of power. Consequently, the previous political attitudes did not allow to effectively use available resources to solve national problems. Some of those problems were encountered when the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) was promoting its communist ideologies along with the negative effects given by the civil war. The earthquake of 1986 further increased the demands on national resources. Government expenditures were subsequently increased to satisfy the needs for the general welfare, liberty and prosperity of the population. In the same way, the Chapultepec Accords also increased the need of resources. This political agreement affected the instruments of power, because it had to satisfy the needs of the new environment. The ultimate consequence of these political efforts weakened the economic, military, diplomatic instruments of power.

The National Security Threat

The Salvadorian government faces many threats to the national security. The country has limited national resources which must be used to protect the nation state and satisfy social demands. The greatest problem experienced by former administrations was the lack of resources to implement their national policies. The previous political efforts were oriented to accomplish two objectives; deterring the communist movement and providing general prosperity through national policy.

To put this discussion in context, it is necessary to consider some economic fundamentals. Societies needs will always exceed the availability of resources. We should not forget that all nations have some kind of economic limitation to satisfy different needs; for that reason, it is very important to know how to establish priorities and rationalize the use of available resources.

The Economic Aid

Due to a lack of resources, previous administrations focused their political efforts to obtain extra resources in order to defend, preserve, maintain and keep alive the incipient democratic system. Resources were obtained by getting economic loans from the international community and friendly countries, and increasing internal taxes. The main purpose of these efforts was to provide economic support to the nation.

The problem of economical aid is the disproportional increase in the international debt and the considerable drain it places on the national resources. History gives us some important economic lesson as indicated by the thoughts of Abraham Lincoln who said; "nobody could survive if someone spent more resources than anybody is capable of earning."² Economic initiatives entail cost. Sometimes it is not practical to sacrifice beyond the economic limits of the near term resources even though it could have some positive effects. All good things have a high price, but are worth paying for because we can enjoy their long term

benefits. However, most of the time a nation can not afford everything that it wants and difficult choices will have to be made.

Problem Solving

The solution to solving the economic problem is to learn how to live with what we have. We must keep in mind that an economic loan is a temporary solution to solve a specific problem. Loans should only be necessary to meet urgent needs for the nation, or with the intention of generating new production capacities such as obtaining capital goods, operating within capital markets, or obtaining other internal investments. However, El Salvador has had many social needs satisfied beyond the limits of wealth by borrowing resources. The administrations had to borrow to sustain the incipient democratic system. But the government never forgot that sooner or later it would have to pay back the loans along with the interest charged by the creditors.

Political Weakness

Due to this political weakness and vulnerability, the government began to receive external political interference by its creditors. These political pressures had a tremendous influence on national policy. Besides having negative effect on the perceived national interests, external pressures also influenced the executive branch before, during, and after the establishment of the peace agreements process.³

Political Consequences

The instruments of power play a tremendous role in the destiny of any nation. They can make a large strategic impact on the support of the administration, especially if they encompass enough power to satisfy, and accomplish the national interest. On the other hand, if the nation has had insufficient national resources, external political interference in the administration of the country could be prevalent at any time. Furthermore, when the administration does not have a national security strategy which is well defined and integrated into the National Agenda, the negatives consequences to the administration can be significant. The nation needs to have a clear vision⁴ of the big picture, a political structure necessary to implement the national policy, and must accumulate resources to support the national interests. In contrast, former national policies did not allow the accumulation of resources to be employed to solve the national problems. As history repeatedly shows us, war is too expensive (in both direct and indirect costs) to avoid significantly damaging a nation's economy. When any country goes to the war, the administration has to commit tremendous resources to support it while addressing national interests, promote the prosperity, and strengthen the sustainable development.

When the Salvadoran Civil War was over, the administration was addressing many problems due to a shortage of resources. Salvadorian political vulnerability was evident to other nations.

This situation made maintaining the new peace environment difficult. The administration was engaged with the UN, international community, and domestic social development, due the Chapultepeq Accords implementation. Those political efforts required the use of significant resources. The government had to use some of those limited resources to provide economic support to the peace process, build a new nation, and establish the economic base to sustain development within a new democratic system.

The whole nation made a tremendous effort before, during and after the peace process, in order to protect the national interest. However, the international community (including some friendly countries) knew that the Salvadoran Government was not able to provide all necessary resources to meet its political responsibilities. Some of them made a political promise to the Salvadoran Government to provide economic aid. Those promises were never kept. Meanwhile, time was running out for the government because it had a schedule to follow and many things to accomplish. Consequently, the administration had to use carefully limited resources to provide the support required.

The government continued to have serious problems due of lack of resources.⁵ Meanwhile, the country waited for the arrival of those political promises which facilitated the accomplishment of Chapultepeq Accords.⁶ A few members of the international community, and other financial organizations, provided economic

aid to the administration (for example, the aid of \$100 million dollars was provided by Japan in 1994) after reevaluating the economic capacity of El Salvador to pay back its loans.⁷ This money was used to rebuild the national infrastructure damaged by the Civil War (two bridges and the Pan-American road).

The government knows that economic aid has to be paid back to their lenders and now is making a special effort to do so. However, the cycle of loans has been difficult to maintain due to a continued lack of economic capacity to provide resources and meet the nation's needs. This vulnerability was evident when the Presidents of Honduras and El Salvador,⁸ signed a political agreement about the border demarcation. They were asking for economic aid from regional organizations such as the UN and OAS to promote development in those areas.⁹

Finally, the Chapultepec Accords established the fundamental phase to initiate a sustainable development within a peaceful environment in the country. The main purpose was to facilitate the growth of a democratic system and to build a more peaceful and comfortable model of life. Now it is time to renew friendship and cooperation with every sector of the society.¹⁰

For the future, it is the mandate to promote and improve the democratic system, peaceful environment, economic policy, political stability, and address each of the national problems on a continuous basis. The Government must establish priorities within the availability of national resources without forgetting

that the national interests have to be accomplished through the implementation of a National Agenda. This Agenda must describe the ends, ways and means for the National Strategy. Some politicians say that this is a significant change to the democratic process.¹¹

During the 6th anniversary of peace, celebrated on January 16, 1998, several politicians said that now it is the right time to make necessary political, economic, social and military changes.¹² This is also the time to give economic consideration to reducing government expenditures and make a better use of state money besides providing general direction to improve the commonwealth.¹³ As history repeatedly shows us, the consequences of any war are enormous for any state. Government has to spend resources and time to recuperate the strength lost. As a matter of fact, War World II is a good example to consider because it had many negative effects on the European countries. We should recall how those countries recovered their economic capabilities. However, we must keep in mind, that their success was accomplished over many years of intense political effort, sacrifice, and hard work along with extensive external assistance.

THE NEED FOR A NATIONAL AGENDA

This is not the time to rest. It is a time to build. The goal of building a new nation is within reach.¹⁴ We can establish

a place to provide the opportunity to work for everybody and a better and safer place to live. The Salvadoran society needs a new national strategy which will give them an environment of prosperity: to promote peace, democracy, tolerance, mutual respect; reduce international debt; and establish a secure environment. The country must promote the attraction of foreign capital which will provide a source for new jobs, increase exports and fiscal discipline, cut the interest rates, and achieve the openness of new markets for Salvadoran products. Now is the right time to begin to build the new face of El Salvador, by executing the national development plan.¹⁵ The democratic process can provide the foundation for national efforts to solve these problems.

This is a national imperative because a magic formula does not exist to transform a society by itself. We must strive to cross the non developmental environment, in order to obtain access and improve the levels of prosperity. Now, to assist in meeting national needs we can design a real document in a systematic and orderly way to address society's requirements. It is an imperative to establish the fundamental basis which will provide the political support needed for an enterprise of this breadth. The Government can provide and increase the levels of social participation by clearly defining the objectives and strategic direction to follow.

Today, it is a great challenge to conceive strategically El Salvador's status in the next millennium. The national security strategy has a great role to play and provide the right response for the future vision of the new nation. The National Agenda must identify priorities and establish the fundamental basis to provide strong support to accomplish an enterprise of this size. The purpose is to be oriented to obtain a greater level of social participation and to clearly define the country's fundamental objectives. The purpose will guide the conception and development of the National Agenda within the conditions set by the policy and strategy implemented. It will also establish and align social needs with the National Agenda.

Political efforts have to be oriented to efficiently build a desirable nation as El Salvador moves into the next millennium. This task will be achieved with a strong policy capable of providing the best guidance for achieving the national interest and the destiny as a nation.

The guiding document can be called an "agenda", "pact" or "project". Whatever the name is, the most important thing is to look at it as a political tool capable of visualizing the future. It should also build a better understanding between different sectors of society. The responsibility to build a better future is in Salvadoran hands.

Efforts have to be oriented on strengthening the democratic process in the Nation. The democratic system will increase

security by protecting, consolidating, and improving every institution related to it. To be efficient, a democracy needs to engage all sectors of the population in the democratic process. The people need to be educated and interested in the political process in order to ensure fairness. Otherwise, the people who participate will take unfair advantage of the people who do not participate. This is human nature. In order to accomplish this national objective, we must remain engaged with the Salvadoran community. Thus, the main objective of the national development plan, is the improvement of living conditions of all Salvadorans.¹⁶

Purpose of the National Agenda

The purpose of the National Agenda is to protect the nation by strengthening the economic, diplomatic, military, and informational instruments of power and by integrating their application with the national security strategy and national policy. It will complement the achievement of national objectives and promote the well being of all Salvadorians.

The Constitution establish the Ends of the National Strategy to be: "protect the democratic system, sovereignty, keeping its values, institutions and territory intact, and provide for the well being and prosperity of the nation and its people."¹⁷

During the 3rd anniversary of the Calderon Sol administration, he asked all Salvadorians to work shoulder to shoulder without make any ideological distinction because it is

necessary to improve the democratic system. He implemented a clear mandate to establish an environment of harmony, honesty, self respect, and cooperative behavior.

Improving the Democratic System

Now, El Salvador needs to implement a program to develop a national culture based on universal principles. These will allow us to live and work toward a common vision of the country, under a legal system where everybody respects the law and promote tolerance, harmony, solidarity, equal opportunity. Responsible participation must be woven into every aspect of the nation's life. We must try to find the main elements necessary to achieve social cohesion while facing a new environment full of threats and possibilities for the nation.¹⁸

All of the national efforts must be done in parallel with the implementation of economic and political policy with the intention of promoting societal transformation and developing all aspects of the nation. The entire society will have to concentrate on extensive, continuous participation, where political leaders have the fundamental responsibilities to consolidate the national interests, revive willpower, and inspire commitment in order to walk together in the right direction for the benefit for the country.¹⁹

The key element of success in this enterprise will be to keep a good balance between the economic and political policy, by implementing a Salvadoran model which allow us, to improve the

living conditions, and promote independence with political responsibility.²⁰ To understand these challenges, we must first be familiar with Salvadorian history.

GENERAL EVOLUTION FROM 1989 TO 2030.

During this period of time, the basis for a new society was established. The peace accords was a result of the political engagement between the government and the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) with the intention of stopping the civil war. This section will project a future vision to the year 2030.

Peace Talks Process

The peace process was a collective effort to build a new nation in order to provide safety, initiate sustainable development, and develop a new strategy for prosperity. The government must take some measurable risk to protect, defend, and enhance the achievement of the national interests by designing a strategic direction to indicate how to complete this national effort while considering the national resources involved. The hardest task for the future is to write the initial strategy.

Periods of Development

This nation must accomplish many steps to attain its sustainable development.

Period of Harmonization (1989-1994), when the nation began a new period of its life as a nation with the purpose of establishing new rules of living together within a democratic environment.

Period of Transition (1995-2000), when the nation will correct many political, economical, social, and military deficiencies to improve the democratic system, reorient the national productivity, improve the prosperity levels, reduce the social problems, and strengthen the Public Security Forces and the Armed Forces.

Period of Strength (2001-2006), when the nation will provide strengthened political and economical efforts (domestic and foreign) through intense diplomacy which allows us to facilitate economical insertion in many regional markets. The intention will be to preserve the stability in the nation by having a strong democratic system and currency within a dynamic market.

Period of World Projection (2007-2012) when the nation will project a new image abroad by implementing a new national security strategy. This will allow us to demonstrate the quality, efficiency, and productivity of the political, economical, social systems, along with the national consensus to achieve the goals.

Period of Productivity (2013-2018) when the nation will begin to establish the fundamental basis for the achievement of sustainable development through intense commercial interchange with other nations. Additionally, El Salvador will improve the quality of its labor force and the political relations with many countries. The Government will continue to reduce social problems and work towards a consensus to achieve the nation's goals.

Period of Investment (2019-2024) when the nation will increase the investment levels in all areas of productivity, by improving political, economic, and military infrastructure. The country will continue establishing the prosperity to achieve better levels of quality of life for all human beings. Additionally, the administration will increase national resources by maintaining the right balance between the economic issues and natural resources.

Period of Taking Off (2025-2030), when the nation will initiate period of rapid growth for sustainable development in any area of the nation's life. The administration will initiate a national effort in the political, economical, social and military areas in order to maintain, protect, preserve and improve the achievement of the national interests.

STRATEGY FOR DESIGN OF A NATIONAL AGENDA

El Salvador will face a hard road that could be capable of outspending us several times in the political arena. The planning and programming procedures that are going to be employed are vital to success. The efficient use of available assets is paramount. A timely and coherent strategy is required. Yet even the most brilliant strategies falter when those involved in planning do not translate strategy into coordinated sequence of properly supported political action. The most essential task will be to encompass an ample spectrum of common interests in order to configure a national policy for the short term which will have

priority over any external interest and transcend the short term desires of any government administration.

Implementation Plan

To conceive, design and achieve a National Agenda it is necessary to rely on a national policy so well conceived by the political leadership that it will allow us to integrate every population sector, promote the free play of ideas within a climate of respect, honesty, loyalty, and sincerity, and will allow us to achieve the heart of any political project: a clearly defined national objective.

The Salvadorian Government need a national consensus in at least five fundamental areas: the development of new institutions either created or reformed by the peace agreement; an economical development project, State reform, systematic encouragement of organizational and democratic participation of the whole society; and cultural transformation to a modern society.

For an enterprise of this magnitude, a National Agenda can not be a simple political agreement. It has to integrate a unified national effort encompassing all of the society and encouraged by the government and by all political parties. Furthermore, it is fundamental to the success of the National Agenda that we develop in a practical way the three key elements of a National Agenda: the general conception of a government model; the logical identification of national objectives; and the active and extensive participation of the core of society.²¹

These objectives can be realized through the political initiatives of Armando Calderon Sol. During the 3rd anniversary of his administration, he said that all Salvadorans should be invited to join in discussions of national issues confronting us and help form a true consensus that promotes and achieves a consensus on how we should proceed to implement the national agenda and achieve true national progress.²²

Need for Active Political Participation

As the political leader, the President of the Nation is the person who can provide direction and guidance to achieve the nation's destiny. Trying to direct a democratic system is a tremendous challenge faced by any administration. Likewise, the main threat which faces any democratic system is political and economical development. There are three important factors that will lead to better results and success; First, harmony is necessary between the Administration and the society. This harmony will allow us to derive enough popular support in a legitimate and efficient way to form a basis for permanent dialog between the government, private sector, and the society. Second, we must establish efficient, honest and responsible administrations. This honesty will guide those who are responsible for economic resources, such as the budget administration, program execution, and national investments. Third, a legitimate State of Law must govern the country. The limits of political participation in any public arena, and the

improvement of legal basis to reinforce the political participation of the executive, legislative and judicial branches within the administrative process. The national security policy (both internal and external) must be defined within a framework of the laws.

All these elements have to be integrated in the National Agenda endorsed by President Calderon Sol²³ because the nation needs the right direction to walk on the road of sustainable development. The National Agenda presents our claim as a society to initiate and begin this Salvadoran effort.

Naturally, to achieve maximum democratic participation requires the solution of the social problems. It must be the real problems affecting the nation as a reflection of a real democracy and will require great social stability. For the nation to have a real democratic system, it will have to have a popular, sustainable administration, because this is the key to balance of the political equation. It is necessary for the government to implement and improve ethics principles and moral standards in the application of national policy in order to achieve and secure economical growth, promote productive development, and make social changes through widespread and active participation.²⁴

The Branches of the Government

The Executive branch, through the President, provides strategic guidance and political direction to the nation by defining national objectives, and implementing long term national

policy which includes a development and security policy. The Legislative and Judicial Branches, through their different functions, provides a professional advice at high levels, with the intention to facilitate the implementation of the national policy, avoid the political interference in the government administration, achieve national interests, and strengthen the national instruments of power.

National Security Council (NSC)

Their role is to give professional advice to the executive office to facilitate strategic guidance, facilitate and identify national objectives, support national policy efforts, and integrate the interagency process to achieve the national interest.

Minister Cabinet

These agencies contribute to achieving national objectives by making efforts to coordinate and integrate the NSC effort and to facilitate the implementation of the national policy in order to achieve national objectives. These agencies implement the national security policy (SNP) and development national policy (DNP). Additionally, they provide professional advice to the NSC and to the President by working as an interagency during the process to elaborate the National Security Appreciation (NSA). Those agencies participate within the design of the National Agenda.

Political Parties

The political parties contribute by giving recommendations related to national policy, and especially to facilitate the interaction process between all the people who support the political basis of those parties. The political parties provide a balance between personal interests, well-being of the nation, and the common welfare of everyone. Additionally, they facilitate the achievement of the national objectives, provide professional advice to the executive branch and contribute to make the design of the national agenda.

State Intelligence Organization (SIO)

This government agency provide professional advice to the executive branch in order to provide strategic information related with the national interest in order to support the national policy. They also facilitate the establishment of the strategic direction by implementing the Intelligence Community Process, and developing the national security appreciation (NSA).

Private Sector

The National Association Private Sector (ANEP) provide professional counsel to the administration in order to improve and stimulate private interests. They should work with all sectors of the society to establish social models which allow us to achieve permanent progress within a peaceful society and real democracy to benefit future generations. They greatly assist the

executive branch's achievement of national objectives through national policy implementation.

Non Government Organizations (NGO)

They can provide professional advice oriented to their ideas as a result of the internal and external influence of their organizations. They help transform society and engage national policy. They should also participate in defining and facilitating the establishment of the national objectives as well as collaborating on the design of a National Agenda.

Board of Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces

They should provide professional advice on national defense policies. They help define national objectives and national security policies while facilitating the strategic guidance for implementing national policies.

Contents of the National Agenda

The National Agenda will fundamentally have to include the following issues: political, social, economic, cultural, military, information and environmental, (especially an economic model); a security and defense policy; a national policy on the use of the natural resources; a national educational system; research and technological development, social development and modernization of the nation state. All these elements must be included in order to treat favorably all the different social demands.

Political Issues

The National Agenda must address: National objectives, national interest and national policy about economic development, national security, national defense, domestic security, national emergencies, external affairs, domestic policy, economic issues (domestic and foreign), national resources, environment, and international debt. It should promote the full validity of the human rights; strengthen the state of law and the legal institutions; eliminate corruption with impunity; strengthen the administrative capacity of the government along with local administrations in order to solve all problem efficiently; improve the mechanism of political participation;²⁵ provide support to all NGOs which are oriented to preserve and promote the national identity; reduce the roots which are responsible for causing, promoting, and increasing violence, criminality, and drug trafficking levels; modernize the government institutions and provide efficiency within the administration.

Social Issues

The National Agenda must address: social well-being; programs of social investment; research and achievement of the national identity; strengthening moral and spiritual values; demographic control; improving education and cultural development; scientific and technological research; determining the role of the social foresight and protection; clarifying the state law, emphasizing respect for human rights; democratic state development; economic

development, and improving the quality of the human resources. Eliminate any form of discrimination against women, improve their social position and increase their quality of life. It must reduce extreme poverty by creating new jobs. It must also integrate criteria of subsidiary, solidarity, responsibility, and management in the poverty policy through development, community participation, decentralization, and economic disbursement. It should encourage social investment as a priority for the human resources development in order to achieve the internal development goals.

Economic Issues

In this area, the National Agenda should address: the protection of natural resources, development of and investment in national infrastructure, increase national production; provide, improve and expand the public services throughout the nation; implement economic programs to generate wealth, initiate economical programs to attract foreign investors; forecast a national economy based on production rather than consumption; and prepare the national economy to face global economic threats in efficient and powerful ways.

The National Agenda should promote a national strategy based on achieving sustainable economic development by: increasing internal markets; promoting national and foreign investment; reducing the debt which is affecting the sustainable development; and increasing economical growth levels which allow us to reduce

poverty levels. Additionally, it must also guarantee social and political stability while providing the basic conditions for economical and political openness for the successful achievement and strengthening of our democracy. We must search for possible economical solutions for reducing the international debt; harmonize the macroeconomics policies with sectarian policies; estimate investment and sustainable productive processes; stimulate the ample study, along with the debate, on economic reforms and institutional changes to motivate free trade and investment within the Central American areas and other countries around the world. Furthermore we should promote and generate technological transfer to improve productivity and the development of technical standards on the environment. We must stimulate production without affecting the environment; promote sustained ecological tourism; formulate policy that is reasonable and provides incentives to the agricultural activities with the purpose of contributing to rural development.

Cultural Issues

A National Agenda should provide foresight of the national identity, historical and archeological values, and encourage the practice of the customs and national traditions. It must: stimulate an ethical lifestyle which promotes and strengthens sustained development; strengthen the development of a national identity within cultural and diverse ethnic groups; promote, maintain and take advantages of the cultural and natural

diversity; reinforce cultural expressions which emphasizes the relationship with the environment; and promote education programs that teach protecting the natural resources. Most importantly we must initiate the restitution and return of cultural goods which have been illegally exported.

Military Issues

The National Agenda must provide a sustained Armed Forces capable of protecting national interests in a democratic system, maintaining a peaceful environment, and protecting the borders and sovereignty. We must develop a collaborating effort with Public Security when it is needed, participate in regional efforts, and support UN peace operations in a limited way. These goals demand highly qualified and motivated soldiers who respect human rights and civil authority. This forces will need to modernize the equipment, improve the training, strengthen the logistic capabilities to protect national objectives.

Information Issues

The National Security Council (NSC) should work closely with the State Intelligence Organization (SIO) in order to integrate the intelligence community efforts to achieve the national interests. Additionally, working with foreign relations, economic organizations (FUSADES and ANEP), along with social organizations and NGOs; facilitate and generate interaction between all government organizations for the accomplishment of the national objectives. Provide and sustain a diplomatic infrastructure

capable of protecting the national interests and sovereignty while collaborating with the government administration to achieve national objectives.

The implementation of a proactive diplomatic effort will allows us to improve the political, economic, and military relations within the region. We should participate in regional efforts to achieve better advantages for the nation. El Salvador should support any international organization which gives political advantages. This demands highly qualified diplomatic personnel who have dynamic political relations with the nations. This infrastructure also needs to reorganize its country teams, modernize its equipment, improve its training, and strengthen its information system.

Environmental Issues

A National Agenda should attain the following environmental goals: harmonize and modernize the environmental laws along with the responsibilities of each institution; reduce the contamination levels on the air, water and soil which are affecting the quality of life; promote the biological diversity and protect areas, centers of bio-diversity and ecological gardens; strengthen the capacity to regulate, supervise, and apply legal standards to prosecute public offenses; promote the knowledge and social participation through a environmental educational system; reduce the deforestation levels, promote the reforestation and the productivity of the forestation activities;

improve the hydrological biases in order to guarantee the use of the waters resources; promote the sustainable development on border zones; promote and participate in regional talks about the use of new ecological products, and initiate studies of the impact of environmental activities.

National Agenda Priorities

El Salvador, as a sovereign and independent state, considers that democracy is the key basis to have success in an enterprise of this nature. However, if the government wants to make a perfect administration, it must encourage open participation of all sectors of the society in order to consolidate the nation state. The National Agenda 2025 of El Salvador will provide the right political tools to realize sustainable development within a democratic environment, achieve the prosperity of this nation state, avoid political interference within the government administration, reduce international debt, and generate and improve the capacity of the instrument of power. This will facilitate the continual striving for achievement of the national objectives.²⁶ Thus, the Nation Agenda must initiate the main priorities of it by implementing the following issues:

The Democratic System must establish its legitimacy by generating a political confidence based on the quality of the political leadership. This will allow everybody to enjoy their human condition and generate political reconciliation in order to establish institutional stability and the well-being of the

society. Finally, we must achieve high quality political leadership by implementing, maintaining, and strengthening the democratic institutions.

The State of Law should constitute the fundamental basis to generate the right climate and improve the efficiency of administration within a democratic environment. Justice must have priority over any particular interest, it must promote ethic and moral values by following rules of law established in the Constitution, and it must respect all democratic institutions. Also, we must improve the judicial and electoral systems.

The Economical Model has to be based on the human capital working in conjunction with the private and public sectors. Both sectors must invest heavily in human capital to improve the quality of the workers, improve economic growth, implement internal saving, reduce international debt, and make sound social investments. Additionally, it is necessary to implement the economical integration of other Central American countries and other economic blocks in order to facilitate the economical insertion into the global economy.

National Expenditures. The Executive Branch must provide strategic direction through government administration by using the instruments of power to provide enough resources to allow the accomplishment of the national objectives in accordance with the national interests. Furthermore, the administration must reduce government expenditures, provide resources according to

priorities and the availability of resources while redistributing resources according the intention of the national policy. By investing in social programs and national infrastructure, the government will provide for the overall welfare. However, the government must define regulations to reduce international debt, and avoid obtaining unnecessary economical loans, in order to generate and initiate national savings. The administration must design the distribution of the resources within the National Budget.

National Investment. The administration will have to fix the damage caused by the civil war; promote areas of economic development; improve communication means, administration procedures, and functions; promote stability and secure the national environment; promote regulation to generate and facilitate the international investment, increase the production of exported goods, facilitate the openness of new markets, and obtain better trade advantages for national products.

Government Modernization. The Government must assume a responsible leadership role to provide strategic guidance through the active participation of the administration, generating confidence, efficiency, honesty to the benefit of the national interest. It must regulate all the national activities; reduce the size of the government, generate and implement local development; instill a sense of honesty, loyalty, and trust in local governments, and improve the international relations by

implementing a foreign policy based in the defensive diplomacy. Also, it must establish the strategic means according with the availability of national resources.

Foreign Policy. The foreign policy must be oriented to obtaining better international advantages through the active participation of the State Intelligence Organization (SIO) in conjunction with the Minister of International Affairs (MIA). We must reorganize and change the diplomatic organizations, with the purpose to generate a proactive diplomacy. This will facilitate the accomplishment and achievement of the national objectives consistent with the national interests and facilitate the application of the economical policies while increasing our nation's resources. Furthermore, we must promote economical alliances within the region and in specific areas.

Privatization Effort It is necessary to reduce the size of the government by cutting administration expenditures, implementing the sale of public services, adopting subsidiary roles, improving the efficiency of the administration, elevating the productivity levels without having political influence, thus reducing the fiscal deficit.

Financial System This system have to have macroeconomics stability in order to facilitate sustainable development. The currency authority must be outside of the political arena in order to have stability. The system must be consistent with the national vision to allow us to promote the national investment

instead of increasing consumption levels. Furthermore, the banking system must provide economic support to the micro and mid-sized enterprises and facilitate their access to credit. By doing so, the administration will avoid that powerful sector from taking advantage over the weaker enterprises.

Tributary System The administration must implement a fiscal discipline that promotes macroeconomics stability, increase public savings, stabilize prices, and promote incentives for private savings. The tributary system must be balanced using the criteria to uniformly burden all social classes for benefit of the national interest.

Public Security The Administration must provide protection to the society and promote the security of the society within a peaceful environment in order to sustain development and confidence within every sector of the nation. The private sector (national and international) must be especially secure to avoid any interference to economic activities that can affect overall economic progress and national development. The administration must work in conjunction with the Minister of Public Security (MOPS) and State Intelligence Organization (SIO) to establish security for the nation. It must enforce the state of law and human rights regulations to facilitate national development.

Environment Policy. The ecosystem must be protected by law. The administration must preserve the natural environment by establishing strong regulations to keep the ecological balance

and provide the legal tool for those persons who do not obey these rules. It must protect air, land, and water resources. Also, it has to implement educational programs within any public or private schools to preserve and respect the natural resources.

National Defense. The military budget has to be reduced because the nation is undergoing tremendous need for money to finance other programs and satisfy social demands. However, it should not forget that the military is a key instrument of power and sometimes it has to be employed to preserve the nation state. It must be healthy enough to accomplish the constitutional mission of protecting the State and maintaining the sovereignty. For that reason, it is necessary to provide them better quality military equipment along with better living conditions for the soldiers. During a time of crisis, the military must be relied upon to achieve the national objectives. However, the Armed Forces (AAFF) must also make organizational changes such as: orienting on the quality of leadership instead of quantity, and promoting the subordination of military to legally established civil power. It must defend and inspire the democratic system, reorganize the Armed Forces, and improve the military educational process, implement the power of the executive branch as the Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces. The National Defense Minister (NDM) must act as his principal advisor in matters related with national defense.

Labor Policy and Social Security. The administration must reorient national efforts to promote the right balance between the private and public sector while considering the national development, economical progress, human dignity, and labor confidence imperatives. We must establish labor policies which promote the security of economical interest in both sectors (workers and owners). These policies should secure the national productivity, social security through legal regulation which provide social stability, reduce labor confrontation, and guaranteed social benefits to the sick and aged.

Health System. The administration must provide extra resources from the national budget to improve the health system and provide basic services to the society. It has to guarantee that health service and medical attention are available to every part of the nation. It must establish a decentralized health care while making investments into better infrastructure and medical equipment.

Educational System. The administration must also encourage private investment in education while providing extra resources from the national budget to improve the educational infrastructure. Also, it should consider a broad education curriculum which includes history, technical, scientific, cultural, ethical and moral values for everyone and at every level of the educational system. This will enhance a sense of respect, dignity, humanity for the entire society. It also must

provide educational access to any social sector, promote the integral development of the society, and improve the overall quality of education in the nation.

Housing Policy. Considering the size of the nation and the numbers of inhabitants, it is mandatory to establish a housing organization policy which allows us to preserve the environment, protect natural resources, balance the development of areas, distribute inhabitants in the entire nation, and maintain a balanced population growth. It is also necessary to provide better living conditions for everyone by giving equal opportunity to obtain access to own a house. The administration must enforce construction laws to provide better quality of housing without losing the national perspective.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE NATION

The National Agenda will contribute to the national effort by establishing strategic direction and guidance to every sector of the nation. The strategic leadership should provide a national security strategy that accomplishes the national objectives and look for the benefit of the nation state by enhancing the national development and security.

During the initial phase of designing a document of this nature, it is necessary to include some key elements such as: who, what, when, where, and what are the national interests, resources, impartiality, national identity, well-being, security and national development are to be addressed. The spirit of it

should include a national perspective which is to facilitate the successful achievement of national objectives to implement a strategic vision. This vision should include: short and long term goals within time and space stipulated; giving specific ends, way and means; tasks to be accomplished by the components of the government. Also, it must keep in mind that the national interest must be accomplished by phases. It should be constructed so that no political party can take advantage of it.

Political impartiality is one of the fundamental elements of implementing the National Agenda. If it is created in this way, the whole nation will benefit from it. This document should reflect the splendor of the spirit and the tenacity of the whole society in the achievement of the national dreams, and rely only on the collective efforts commensurate with the available national resources.²⁷ The national design must include its nature and scope addressed in short and long periods of time with the purpose of solving national problems within stipulated times without taking advantages of any political parties. It must consider that national efforts have to be done for the benefit of the whole nation.

THE FUTURE OF THE NATION

Political experience shows how other countries have attained sustainable development, and how they constantly try to reinforce their economies in order to prepare for the future. The common characteristic of those countries has been an effective strategy

and strong national cohesion to solve their problems by applying the following general rules to achieve development: provide resources to invest in human capital (including highly technical skill) through the education, technical capacity and instruction of production skills; promote research and development using technological institutions which provide and nurture innovation, new production methods, and improved quality; modernize the public sector through the legislation, decentralization, and privatization of public services; modernize the economical infrastructure and the communication network to improve the efficiency and commerce; promote the foreign investment through well balanced legislation which allows us to maintain and safeguard the high quality business environment; and protecting the environment in order to guarantee future national growth through the protection of natural resources and achieve the balance which allows us protect the environment for future generations.

CONCLUSIONS

In the words of the 18th and 19th centuries were dedicated to machines and modern states, the 20th century was dedicated to technology and knowledge, and the 21st century will be dedicated to giving man his inherent dignity.²⁸ Like the bountiful fruits of a well maintained garden, the National Agenda must be well protected, kept in good shape, and requires much work.²⁹

To implement a coherent National Agenda, it is necessary to realize the intention to achieve a vision which will make it a national imperative to achieve a national consensus in the preparation, execution, evaluation, and reorientation of the country. Consequently, this patriotic attitude will allow us to identify an integrated, global, permanent, and legitimate National Agenda.

The political leaders play a tremendous role in this process. For instance, political leadership has to provide strategic guidance, through a national plan which is aligned with a National Agenda. The prosperity of the nation requires that we have a national agenda that can determine with precision the ends to be accomplished by this document in the future. It must show possibilities and conditions we can attain and project the strength of the nation by exercising its sovereignty over the future.

The National Agenda should be elaborated in an academic way. It must include the historical reality of its past to show the roots of the wear and exhaustion suffered by the nation with the intention of defining the new role for the nation by considering its own characteristics, resources and aspirations. On the other hand, the nation has to look at its own destiny with originality while taking some advantages of the experiences of more developed countries. But, we should evict external intrusions and fight the

natural tendency to imitate the social and economic models of others.

The National Agenda concept includes a feasible image of what the nation state can achieve through long term policies and through the utilization of the instruments of power. Within the international community, we have to develop the own zone of influence. By designing a comprehensive National Agenda we can develop an azimuth to point out the way to achieving peace and prosperity in the future.

RECOMMENDATIONS

El Salvador need to implement a National Agenda which include ends, ways and means, considering a stipulated period of time (short and long term) in order to achieve the well being and national prosperity. National interests drive the Salvadorian government in a functional policy by implementing a national agenda, where a statement of interests should be expressed as a desired end state or condition. The Salvadorian government must examine the national environment in order to identify political, economic, cultural, social, military, information and environmental factors, trends, and events that could affect the national interests. The administration must establish strategic (measurable) objectives in order to protect, defend, and enhance the national interests. The government must formulate national programs to involve national resources required to achieve the strategic objectives. Also, a National Agenda must: take

advantage of the maturing political society in the whole country; promote, increase, and strengthen democracy in order to achieve and improve the conditions of stability; every sector of the society must be involved in the design and execution of the National Agenda; the National Agenda must be implemented over a short term to strengthen the democracy; the National Agenda must be an integrated effort and should not be an unilateral effort of one party or sector of the society.

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