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THINK • ANALYZE • PROPOSE

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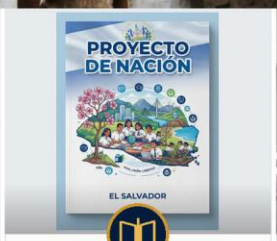
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EDUCATION AND THE FUTURE

The priority must be to continually improve the quality of education, foster critical thinking, and strengthen scientific training.

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Analysis, reflection and political debate aimed at strengthening democracy and national development.

An Opposition Presidential Candidate Is a Digital Illiterate



A candidate aspiring to the presidency of the country recently appeared from an opposition party who has a phobia of technology. He mentioned that if he were to win the presidency—which is a zero percent probability—he would take away tablets and computers from schoolchildren. It seems this gentleman is stuck in the caveman era, or in the age of the horse and donkey, and has not realized that the world and civilization have changed drastically and disruptively, and that we are in the digital era where the world has become a global village. In this era, mastering technological tools represents a means of survival, and what better way than developing these skills from childhood, as El Salvador's educational system is currently promoting? Either he does not realize what world we live in, or he is a "digital illiterate."

In this new civilization, it is no longer just about knowing how to read and write, but about early incorporation—from childhood—into the mastery and application of technological tools that will prevent individuals from being marginalized from the digital environment in the future. A digital illiterate enters at an educational and labor disadvantage, reflecting lower competitiveness and productivity, as well as evident limitations in accessing good employment, carrying out electronic procedures, or pursuing online education, which ultimately leads to social isolation. Children and young people cannot be condemned to this type of school discrimination and future labor discrimination. On the contrary, implementing the use of tablets and computers in schools, even in rural or low-resource areas, allows them greater competitiveness and skill development on par with urban and private schools, without major disadvantages.

Having children and youth use technological tools for their school training grants them great competitive advantages, along with greater pedagogical and didactic development throughout their educational process. Learning becomes more personalized. Digital systems and artificial intelligence allow them to perform individual exercises through which they advance at their own pace; these interactive tools better capture attention and stimulate learning, and students can work in teams without physical barriers. Therefore, in this digitalized world, developing the digital competencies of children and youth prepares them for future social and labor challenges. So, the question is: What kind of world does this candidate live in?

Change for Continuity with the U.S.

The midterm elections in the United States have once again confirmed a historical tendency: in more than 90% of these elections, the party occupying the White House loses electoral ground in the Legislature. Therefore, the Democratic recovery of control over both chambers of Congress does not constitute an anomaly, but rather a recurring dynamic of American politics. The result also reflects the limitations of a political system trapped in bipartidismo, where voters seem to have few alternatives outside the two traditional ideological blocs.

Now then, what does this mean for El Salvador? Fundamentally, it must be viewed as a recomposition of internal American political power. Although the new legislative distribution will limit Donald Trump's margin of maneuver, it does not necessarily entail changes in foreign policy, the conduct of which corresponds primarily to the Executive.



In this scenario, one must not forget the immediate precedent: during Joe Biden's Democratic administration, the relationship with El Salvador went through moments of tension while the State Department embraced the narrative of Soros-backed activism. However, this approach was discarded during the final year of his mandate and replaced by a more pragmatic vision. Thus, with the arrival of Ambassador William H. Duncan in January 2023, an rapprochement began that translated into effective cooperation, particularly in two strategic areas: reducing irregular migration and combating drug trafficking. It was thus demonstrated that shared interests can prevail over partisan and ideological differences. Even if Democrats were to recapture the White House in 2028, there would be no reason to anticipate a policy of permanent confrontation with our country.

The legitimacy of President Bukele and his administration does not depend on American elections either. His validation corresponds exclusively to Salvadorans and will be expressed once again at the polls in February 2027, when legislative representation will also be renewed. El Salvador has demonstrated the capacity to defend its sovereignty and conduct its own international relations, even under difficult diplomatic circumstances. For this reason, the expectations of certain opposition sectors who trust that an eventual Democratic return will automatically alter the Salvadoran political scenario lack any foundation.

Peoples Are Grateful and Recognize Their Executioners



Politics often commits a recurring mistake: underestimating the memory of peoples. It is frequently asserted that societies forget quickly, that they are easily manipulable, or that they end up adapting to any circumstance. However, experience proves the exact opposite. Peoples may forgive many things, but they hardly ever forget who protected them and who condemned them to suffering.

What is happening today in Haiti constitutes forceful evidence of this reality. Following the kidnapping of four Salvadoran military aviation technicians by criminal organizations operating in Haitian territory, the reaction of broad sectors of the population has not been rejection of the Salvadoran presence. On the contrary, numerous voices have raised a clamor directed at President Nayib Bukele: to do in Haiti what he did in El Salvador.

The reason is simple. The Haitian people perfectly recognize who their executioners are. For years, gangs have kidnapped entire communities, imposed their authority through violence, challenged the State, and turned broad areas of the country into territories dominated by brute force. Wherever the Law disappears, crime inevitably appears. Wherever the State retreats, those who seek to replace it through terror advance. That very tragedy is what Haiti is living.

However, Haiti also observes something that previously seemed impossible: a small country in Central America proved that gangs are not invincible. El Salvador demonstrated that when political will, state

determination, and a coherent strategy exist, criminal organizations can be dismantled and expelled from the territorial control they had usurped. The recovery of security made it possible to restore state authority, return tranquility to millions of citizens, and create conditions for development.

Therefore, the popular support President Bukele receives from Haiti is not the product of propaganda or ideology. It is the recognition of an observable reality: citizens compare results. When a population lives under the permanent threat of armed criminals, the discussion ceases to be theoretical and becomes existential. People quickly understand who combats their executioners and who coexists with them (pseudo-journalists or not).

In El Salvador, there is a particularly clear manifestation of this phenomenon. The Salvadoran people also identified those who for decades tolerated, negotiated, utilized, or politically coexisted with criminal structures. For this reason, the so-called "corpse parties" or "zombie parties"—arena and fmln (in lowercase)—awaken feelings of repudiation, rejection, repugnance, and political disgust in broad social sectors. This is not merely electoral punishment; it is the moral condemnation a society issues against those it holds responsible for its darkest years.

Because in the end, a political truth exists that is as simple as it is universal: peoples are grateful, but before that, they perfectly recognize their executioners. And once they identify them, they hardly ever trust them again, and the political-electoral punishment is simply brutal!

De Facto Sovereignty: The Salvadoran Shield Before the U.S. Congress



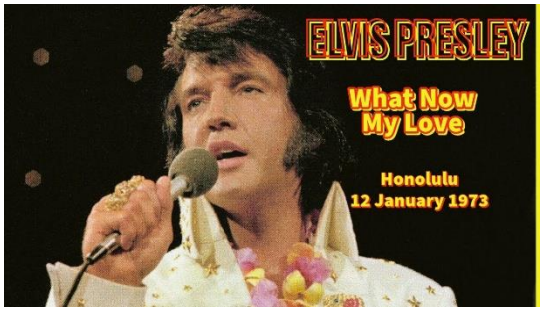
The new legislative map in Washington, with a Democratic majority in both chambers of the Capitol, reactivated old predictions of isolation and external pressures against El Salvador. Traditional spokespersons anticipate a diplomatic siege orchestrated from legislative committees led by profiles critical of the Salvadoran model. However, a rigorous analysis of the correlation of institutional forces reveals that the Salvadoran State operates today under unprecedented geostrategic and financial shielding.

First, the American institutional architecture limits the scope of the Capitol: foreign policy and security agencies depend strictly on the Executive Branch and the White House veto, for which Democrats lack the required two-thirds supermajority to override it.

Second, and fundamentally, the bilateral relationship rests upon national security metrics. El Salvador stopped going to Washington with the outstretched hand of post-war governments. By financing the sustainment of the State of Exception and its security infrastructure with its own resources, the country canceled external tutelage: what is not subsidized cannot be financially conditioned.

To this are added objective results indisputable to Washington's interests: the historical reduction of irregular migratory flows originating from Salvadoran territory and a record in intercepting narcotics in international waters. In 21st-century geopolitics, operational solvency displaces committee rhetoric. While speeches in the Capitol seek to feed media agendas, El Salvador consolidates a *de facto* sovereignty sustained by territorial control, budgetary autonomy, and state discipline. The internal stability of our country is no longer hostage to foreign partisan oscillations.

Seeking to Consolidate Achievements: What Now?





In 1961, the French song titled "Et maintenant?"—which in Spanish could be translated as "¿Y ahora qué?"—was popularized. Its lyrics were written by Pierre Delanoë, and the music by Gilbert Bécaud, who was also its first interpreter. It was adapted into English as "What Now My Love?" by Carl Sigman and sung by Frank Sinatra, Elvis Presley, and Shirley Bassey. In Spanish, it was popularized by Javier Solís in 1965 under the title "¿Por qué me dejas?", with an adaptation by Julio Guiu Clara.

Although the song is about the emptiness left by a romantic breakup, we will use that question here to ponder what remains to be done in El Salvador now that the government has achieved evident accomplishments in security, health, tourism, education, the restoration of historical memory, the modernization of popular markets, etc. What now?

We will focus on three aspects: the economy, the quality of institutions, and social transformations.

Regarding the first—according to the Central Reserve Bank (BCR)—in the second quarter of this year, GDP had an interannual growth of 5.1%. The main dynamic sectors were construction, services, and tourism. It is

now fitting to ask: Is productivity increasing? Is this growth translating into better salaries? Is this growth sustainable? Which social groups are benefiting? Considering that remittances play an important role in the economy, the questions that arise are: Are they creating well-being or dependency? Why are they not transformed into greater productive investment? What would happen if employment for Salvadorans abroad decreased? What consequences does migration bring to family structure?

Another important topic in this field is public debt: How can fiscal discipline and social spending be reconciled? How much budgetary margin remains for education, health, and infrastructure? What cost will financial commitments entail for future generations?

Regarding the quality of institutions: How do we transition from a country that exports people to one that generates opportunities? How do we develop industry, technology, professional services, and higher-skilled jobs, considering that the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) identifies digital services, medical devices, digital components, and tourism as key lines for the future?

Concerning social transformations, it is fundamental to foresee strategies to reduce poverty and inequalities, especially between the countryside and the city. It is important to foresee how to turn poverty reduction into permanent social mobility. On the other hand, regarding demographics, let us remember that the country has the highest population density in the American continent and—moreover—it is essential to consider the consequences brought by the decline in fertility that began several decades ago in all countries, including El Salvador, producing a percentage reduction in its young population and an increase in the population demanding employment on one hand, and an increase in the elderly population requiring pensions and more expensive medicines due to the nature of ailments typical of those ages. Likewise, the latter also implies preparing pension services for a very significant change.

In the area of security, the question arises of how to turn it into sustainable economic growth, and how to relate it to the rule of law and institutional trust, evaluating its results without reducing the debate to ideological positions.

In education, it is not enough to incorporate computers or digital platforms, nor the use of AI within them. It is key to further support early childhood education, boasting a greater number of centers nationwide and continuous content updating; in primary and secondary education: to deepen scientific knowledge and values.

Furthermore, it is imperative that universities truly live in the spirit of the Córdoba Manifesto, interacting with society to understand its needs, resolving them through research—and both linkage and research must enrich lectures. At all educational levels, the priority must be to continuously improve teaching quality, the development of critical thinking and scientific training, as well as preparing youth for the labor market and... solving the gap between public and private education.

On the other hand, it is paramount to address food security and climate change, and how to include the latter in new financial figures. Likewise, urban growth and the requirements of agriculture and industry must be reconciled with water availability, and how to secure this asset for future generations.

Finally, to close the circle, let us focus on four crucial topics:

1. After solving the issue of security, how do we convert stability into human development? How do we transition from resolving crime reduction to examining the quality of employment, education, investment, institutionality, and well-being?

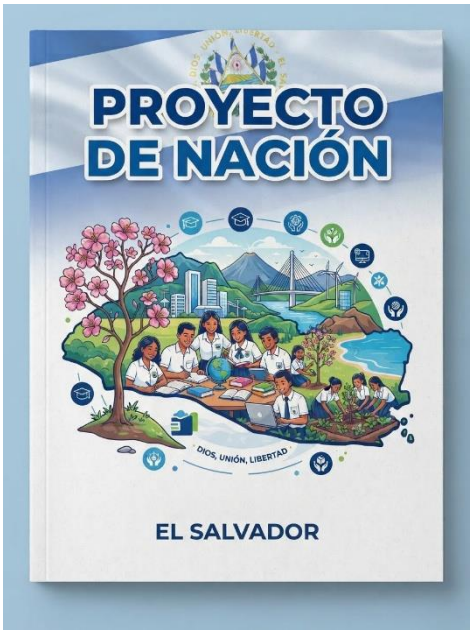
2. How do we face the demographic transition—which has already begun—along with the country's economic future? How do we harmonize fertility, migration, aging, pensions, and the economy?

3. How do we articulate, within a democratic regime, economic growth and the distribution of its benefits? How do we harmonize macroeconomic successes with the real living conditions in households?

4. What does development truly mean for a society? Having greater economic growth, greater security, better institutions, or citizens with greater opportunities and capabilities? How do we ensure we do not have to choose among them, but that they can be harmonized and achieved jointly?

A Project of Nation and Faith

When speaking of a political project, social and economic aspects, strategies, and public policies are normally proposed, among others; however, when structuring a project of nation, things change—even more so when faith is incorporated into the equation. This is precisely what has happened in El Salvador and other nations following the same steps walked by our country.



Undoubtedly, when faith is present in a project of whatever nature, and even more so when it is for the destiny of a homeland, every decision made is strengthened. Even when small mistakes are made, good always emerges from them because the hand of God is present. Therefore, taking faith as the basis of every country's decision accumulates a seedbed of positive experiences.

Thus, as First Peter 2:13-14 expresses: *"Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human authority: whether to the emperor, as the supreme authority, or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right."* Herein lies precisely the importance of placing in God's hands every action aimed at the common good of peoples.

Likewise, it must be considered that the human mind continually makes mistakes due to its own imperfections, but if God is present, He grants the grace to remain in righteousness and goodness for the population, and even more so, to rectify the path when a minor wrong is committed in order to achieve a greater good. Thus, the population must place the designs of the homeland in God's hands, guided by our ruler.

Human intelligence cannot be considered sufficient to guide its own steps and those of others; therefore, it is necessary to ask for divine wisdom in every decision made so that the quality of life and dignity of every Salvadoran may improve as the nation project advances and structures a people in peace and prosperity. It is time for all of us to put our work, trust, and faith in the path being charted.

Lactation Rooms: Small Spaces That Make a Big Difference

In El Salvador, speaking of inclusion also means recognizing the needs of mothers and, especially, of infants during their first months of life. In this sense, lactation rooms represent an important alternative for mothers who need a private, comfortable, and adequate space to feed their babies or express breast milk. Although some establishments and institutions already boast these facilities, it is still necessary to promote their incorporation into more workspaces and public service locations.

In our country exists the *Ley Amor Convertido en Alimento* (Love Converted into Food Law), a regulation seeking to protect and promote breastfeeding, establishing provisions to facilitate its practice. Among them is the implementation of lactation rooms in workplaces, both public and private, so that mothers can feed their children or express and store breast milk.



Likewise, working mothers are recognized the right to one paid daily hour during the first six months postpartum for breastfeeding or expressing breast milk, without this time being deducted from their lunch hour.

This is not simply about outfitting a room, but about guaranteeing conditions that allow mothers to carry out this activity with peace of mind and security.

Lactation rooms also represent an advance in recognizing the needs of women within workplace and public spaces. For a long time, motherhood and caregiving have been viewed as responsibilities that must adapt to daily activities, when conditions should also exist for institutions to adapt to these needs.

Therefore, it is important that more establishments incorporate these spaces and that they not be viewed solely as a requirement, but as a way to promote the well-being of mothers and the development of children.

Inclusion is also built upon small actions. Having a lactation room may seem simple, but for a mother it represents comfort, privacy, and the possibility of continuing to feed her baby without having to face uncomfortable situations.

Because guaranteeing adequate spaces for breastfeeding is also recognizing the importance of care from the first months of life.

Honduras: Gold for the Corrupt

While the National Congress, its President Tomás Zambrano, and deputies from all benches pretend to combat maras and gangs, Hondurans—who know firsthand the operating methods of both politicians and criminal structures—understand they are facing yet another pact of impunity: politicians clinging to protecting their past, securing their future, and refusing to surrender power in the present.

Violence rates remain alarming. The police lie and lie again. They capture individuals who have nothing to do with criminal structures, but in order to present results and pad statistics, they end up taking the fall. They do not look for who is guilty, but who will pay. A spectacle of cameras, uniforms, social media announcements, and press conferences. Hours later, many of these individuals are released with their honor damaged, terrified to denounce or clear their name before public opinion, with no one answering for it. Many prefer to risk their lives leaving Honduras undocumented for the United States.

When they "manage" to "capture" a gang member (*mara* or *pandillero*), they strip off their shirt, display their tattoos, and, like synchronized swimmers, the police allow them to "boast" of their "neighborhood."



Prisons once again move gang members. Under the excuse, once again, that the Government is thereby "retaking" "control"—except that at the moment of making these movements, the gang members have access to cameras, microphones, and social media, where they take the opportunity to send greetings to their family members, friends, and colleagues. The same scenario. The same actions. The same results.

On July 26, 2017, Yani Benjamín Rosenthal Hidalgo, former president of the Liberal Party, pleaded guilty before a federal court in New York for conducting monetary transactions with property derived from illicit activities related to drug trafficking. The U.S. Department of Justice documented his participation in a scheme to launder drug trafficking proceeds for *Los Cachiros*. On December 15, 2017, he was sentenced to 36 months in prison, along with the forfeiture of $500,000 and a $2.5 million fine.

Nine years later, on November 5, 2026, while the Government and the National Congress pretend to wage a frontal war against criminal organizations, that same Congress, with the same deputies and the same president of this branch who claim to combat maras and gangs, approved the *Gran Cruz con Placa de Oro* (Grand Cross with Gold Plaque) decoration for Yani Rosenthal, a convicted felon.

While politicians like Yani receive gold, recognitions, and applause, millions of Hondurans continue to face poverty, insecurity, unemployment, lack of medicines, and abandonment.

But there is something this Honduran political class has failed to destroy: the dignity of a noble yet brave people. A people who observe and take note.

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