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Salvadoran Rebels Launch New Attacks; Unts Office Bombed

by Deborah Tyroler

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According to military sources, rebels attacked six military posts on Feb. 16, killing at least 12 soldiers and wounding 14. At a press conference, Col. Benjamin Canjura, commander of the Army Engineers detachment in Zacatecoluca, 22 miles southeast of San Salvador, the FMLN attacked the army base at the Entre Rios cotton cooperative outside Zacatecoluca with mortar and rifle fire. In this incident, nine soldiers were killed and 11 wounded during the two-hour attack which began at 2 a.m. Canjura said rebels also attacked before dawn Civil Defense posts in Jerusalem, Ostuma and Barrio Nuevo, three small towns in his central military region. He said three soldiers were killed and three wounded in those attacks. Col. Jose Tejada told AP by telephone that the rebels launched four bombs at the headquarters of the 6th Army brigade in Usulután, 68 miles east of San Salvador. They also launched four bombs at the headquarters of the elite Atonal battalion about a mile from the 6th brigade, he said. Three bombs cleared the wall around the headquarters, but did not explode. The one that fell outside the base exploded beside a house, wounding two civilians, he said. On Feb. 16, the armed forces press office reported that late on Feb. 15 the rebels launched an offensive against a police garrison located in northeastern San Salvador, and the police headquarters in the downtown area of the capital. The attacks resulted in major damages, and injuries to two policemen and two civilians, said the press office. Security agents reported finding eight US-made anti-tank missiles (66 and 55 mm) abandoned by the rebels near the two locales. In telephone calls to local radio stations, representatives of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front said the attacks were a "response to the repression of the government of Jose Napoleon Duarte." On Feb. 16, rebel commando units also reportedly destroyed electricity pylons and telephone equipment. The San Salvador office of the National Salvadoran Workers Union (UNTS) was bombed on Feb. 14 by unidentified assailants. There have been no reports of casualties. The UNTS is El Salvador's largest labor confederation. (Basic data from Notimex, AP, 02/16/89)

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