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At a press conference July 24 in San Salvador, Guillermo Ungo, leader of the Movimiento Nacional Revolucionario (MNR), said President Alfredo Cristiani's economic program will only exacerbate the country's political crisis and repression. He said that Salvadorans from the moderate right to the radical left share opinions on the negative consequences of the government's economic policies. Ungo, who also heads the Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR), the rebels' political ally organization, criticized statements made by Cristiani in a July 20 speech outlining gradual "economic liberalization." According to Ungo, Cristiani's program would be more accurately labeled the "economic policy of social polarization." He warned that the economic measures will "enhance conditions that could produce a social explosion." According to the MNR, price hikes for public transportation, a floating exchange rate, and interest rate increases will raise living costs, aggravate income and wealth inequities, and expand the legions of the poor. Ungo said, "We are very concerned because the breakdown in peace negotiations combined with these economic measures will lead to greater dissatisfaction and more incidents of open expression of protest. Given the mentality of this government, this escalation in tension and protest will be interpreted as subversion." Regarding the search for a negotiated solution to the war, Ungo said the Cristiani government desires "dialogue to converse, not to negotiate." Realistic conditions for negotiation, he said, must be identified and developed. Ungo said the MNR has pointed out that the FMLN has presented several proposals. These proposals, he added, may be rejected or accepted, but they do provide groundwork to enter into negotiations. (Basic data from Notimex, 07/24/89)

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