10-25-1989

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El Salvador: Military High Command Dismisses Rebel Peace Proposals

by Deborah Tyroler

Category/Department: General

Published: Wednesday, October 25, 1989

At a press conference in San Salvador on Oct. 20, Defense Minister Gen. Humberto Larios described peace agreement proposals submitted by the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) earlier in the week in San Jose, Costa Rica, as "absurd, ridiculous and impossible." The general asserted that the FMLN's armed struggle was illegitimate, since sufficient political space exists in El Salvador for citizens to discuss their concerns. Larios was surrounded by his deputy defense ministers, the armed forces chief of staff, and 30 commanders of assorted brigades, battalions and security forces. He said the objective of the presence of the military high command at the press conference was "to give a categorical, solid and clear response of the unity of the armed forces." Larios denied that divisions existed among the ranks of the armed forces. The military, he said, is a solid, professional institution, and transparent to the Salvadoran people, "because we know" that our role is an extremely important one. He added, "We are the depositaries of the arms that our people have given us to defend them. The minister stated that FMLN hopes to "generate conflict and schisms within the armed forces." In San Jose, the FMLN proposed that all officers in charge of the war be retired as a crucial step in a generalized restructuring of the military. The restructuring is aimed at instilling respect for human rights and the "dismantlement of repressive forces." (Basic data from Notimex, 10/20/89)

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