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El Salvador: Notes On Recent Fighting, Economic Sabotage

by Deborah Tyroler

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Jan. 5: The Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) have commenced a new economic sabotage campaign, resulting in an electricity blackout affecting most of the country. Military sources reported that rebel units attacked military posts in three villages in Chalatenango department, resulting in the deaths of two soldiers and one rebel. On the same day, rebel units clashed with National Guard troops in Tonacatepeque, 30 km. from San Salvador. The military press office claimed that rebels kidnapped 60 persons within the past week, including eight peasants in Nueva Concepcion, Chalatenango department on Jan. 4. Rebel commandos set a bomb at a supermarket in downtown San Salvador. Jan. 9: For the fifth time, rebels attacked a cotton cooperative near the capital. Losses now total over \$3 million. Government troops continued intense bombing of presumed rebel positions on Guazapa Volcano. This operation is part of a larger campaign launched in late December which includes aerial bombings in the village of Aguilares, north of San Salvador, and in San Jose Guayabal, Cuscatlan department. Jan. 10: Rebel commandos set off two powerful bombs at a car dealership in downtown San Salvador, resulting in the destruction of three vehicles and damage to four. The bombing was the seventh since Jan. 1. On Jan. 9, rebels bombed another retail outlet in the capital, causing extensive material damage. Government officials have reported that the state-run electricity company is experiencing its most serious economic crisis in the decade-long civil war, result of rebel sabotage. In the past few hours, six primary distribution towers and 24 pylons were dynamited. As of late Wednesday, 60% of the country was experiencing an electricity blackout, including half of San Salvador. Jan. 16: Rebel radio reports said 26 government troops were killed or wounded in fighting in San Salvador and in the northern region of the country. Intense fighting continues on the slopes of the Guazapa Volcano. According to rebel sources, the fighting at Guazapa has resulted in at least 22 troop casualties. On Tuesday, rebels clashed with government troops in the village of San Lucas, La Union department. Four soldiers were killed or wounded, and the rebels captured a large quantity of war material, according to the radio sources. Jan. 17: Government troops and rebels clashed for almost an hour on Wednesday night in Colonia Montebello, western San Salvador. Colonia Montebello is described as a middle-class residential district. (Basic data from Notimex, 01/05/90, 01/10/89; Xinhua, 01/11/90, 01/17/90; AFP, 01/17/90)

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