

11-23-1989

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Recommended Citation

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Colombia: Government Rejects Rebel Demands For Gasoline Price Freeze

by John Neagle

Category/Department: General

Published: Thursday, November 23, 1989

On Nov. 11, Andres Restrepo Londono, president of the state-run Ecopetrol, told participants at a forum in Bogota that the government will not respond to demands by the National Liberation Army (ELN) for a freeze in gasoline prices. In a message to the forum, the ELN said it would renew attacks on the industry if the government implements a price hike in late November. Early in the week, the government announced record oil production of 440,000 barrels for the month of October. Oil export revenues are expected to surpass coffee earnings next year. In 1988, petroleum exports totaled \$937 million, according to Ecopetrol, compared to \$1.6 billion of coffee exports. Ecopetrol estimates petroleum earnings will drop to \$900 million this year because of ELN attacks on the oil pipeline between the eastern Cano Limon oil field and the Atlantic coast, and other facilities. The guerrillas' objective is to force the government into nationalizing the petroleum industry. (Basic data from AP, 11/12/89)

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