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El Salvador: Notes On Recent Fighting

by Deborah Tyroler

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June 10: Eastern El Salvador, and most of the capital city experienced power black-outs, result of intense guerrilla sabotage of power lines and transformers. Military sources reported three rebel deaths and four wounded in fighting in Cabanas department. An officer pertaining to the Bracamonte Battalion was reported killed near the village of Las Vueltas. June 13: The Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) reported rebels had destroyed an army tank in the Dolores suburb of San Salvador. A communique by the armed forces press office denied the rebel claim, and said three soldiers had been wounded in the rebel attack. The army statement also said 10 rebels and one soldier died in heavy fighting near the town of Jocoaitique, Morazan department. Rebels also damaged a UH-1H helicopter. June 14: The FMLN announced a new wave of attacks, accusing the government of doing nothing to bring a halt to human rights violations by the armed forces. June 15: Much of the country was without electricity. Radio reports cited heavy fighting in San Miguel and other areas after raids by the FMLN. June 18: In a Radio Venceremos broadcast, the FMLN claimed to have caused 107 casualties to government troops in the last eight days. In a June 15 attack against the 3rd Infantry Brigade headquartered in the city of San Miguel, said the FMLN, 15 soldiers were killed or wounded, and two helicopters damaged. The armed forces press office reported that guerrilla sabotage of the El Jalacatal electricity substation south of San Miguel city had caused over \$1 million in damages. Military sources reported 36 rebel dead in the past week in Chalatenango department. Two soldiers were killed, three wounded, and four disappeared in a rebel ambush on the Sensuntepeque highway, northern El Salvador. June 20: Military sources reported that rebels fired on the home of Labor Minister Mauricio Gonzalez in San Salvador's Maquilishuat suburb, and threw bombs at the military Civil Defense headquarters, but no injuries were reported. The military also reported that three rebels were injured in clashes with soldiers in the last 24 hours in Chalatenango department. The armed forces press office said rebels blew up two electrical towers in western El Salvador and four other electrical pylons in the central part of the country, causing widespread power failures. June 21: Military sources reported the death of a Treasury Police agent during a rebel ambush in La Palma, Chalatenango department. In the same incident, six police disappeared, and a civilian's home and vehicle were destroyed. The armed forces press office also reported that on June 20, one soldier died and an officer was seriously wounded in an attack against soldiers guarding a building owned by the National Telecommunications Association (ANTEL) in the Metropoli suburb of San Salvador. Next, the military sources said one rebel was killed in a clash with soldiers in the village of Jucuapa, Usulután department. June 26: The armed forces press office reported that three rebels died, and 10 were wounded, while a soldier died during a guerrilla ambush of a military truck near San Rafael Cedros, Cuscatlán department. Another soldier pertaining to the 6th Infantry Brigade headquartered in Usulután department, was injured when rebel units attacked early Tuesday morning on the periphery of the village of San Francisco Javier. Electricity rationing affects the entire country, although Usulután department is the most affected. Losses during the months of May and June resulting from guerrilla sabotage are estimated at more than \$1.115 million, according to government sources. June 27: The FMLN called on the government and the military to cease interference in transmissions of their two clandestine radio stations, Radio Venceremos and Radio Farabundo Marti. The objective they

said is to prevent Salvadorans from receiving uncensored information on peace talks, the agendas of the two sides in the talks, military activities and human rights abuses. June 28: On the evening of June 27, president of the national legislature, Roberto Alvarenga, escaped an attempt on his life on a downtown street in San Salvador. At a press conference on Thursday, Alvarenga rejected the possibility that rightist groups opposed to peace talks with the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) were responsible. Alvarenga said the rebels were responsible for the attack, described as "enemies of democracy." Next, Alvarenga denied the existence of radical rightist groups, and asserted that the country's leaders are "the real Salvadoran people." Alvarenga is a top leader of the ruling Nationalist Republican Party (ARENA). Military sources reported several clashes between government troops and rebels, including near Santa Marta, Cabanas department, and the village of Agua Caliente, Chalatenango department. On Thursday morning, rebel units attacked soldiers stationed on the Santa Isabel ranch, located north of San Salvador. Three guerrillas were killed, and one soldier pertaining to the Atlacatl Battalion was wounded. Next, rebels attacked a group of military engineers in San Juan Tepezontes, La Paz department. Notimex reported that the armed forces commenced a forced recruitment campaign June 27 in poor neighborhoods located in northern San Salvador. Beginning on Wednesday, soldiers obligated boys on their way to school to step down from buses to be searched and examined. (Basic data from Notimex, 06/10/90, 06/18/90, 06/20/90, 06/21/90, 06/26/90, 06/28/90; AFP, 06/13/90, 06/20/90; DPA, 06/15/90)

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