

7-13-1990

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Recommended Citation

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Next Round Of Peace Talks Between Salvadoran Government & Rebels Set For July 20-24 In Costa Rica

by Deborah Tyroler

Category/Department: General

Published: Friday, July 13, 1990

On July 11 in San Jose, the Costa Rican Foreign Ministry announced that the next round of peace talks between representatives of the Salvadoran government and Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) are scheduled for July 20-24 in Guanamar, some 300 km. north of San Jose on the Pacific coast. According to ministry sources, President Alfredo Cristiani's team will come prepared to offer more flexible positions on armed forces reductions, such as a gradual cutback in the 3,000-strong elite Atlacatl Battalion. The FMLN will reportedly offer to suspend economic sabotage. Meanwhile, in San Salvador, US Asst. Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs Bernard Aronson told reporters that he questioned the rebels' interest in ending the war. According to Aronson, the FMLN is the only Salvadoran group which apparently does not recognize the need for peace. Aronson said the FMLN may seek pretexts to justify a new offensive during the next round of talks. If this occurs, he added, the FMLN will be justly condemned by Salvadoran society and the international community. In the past week, the FMLN has reiterated its intent to escalate military actions "to the maximum" with the objective of promoting the negotiations process. The US official asserted that the war must end before necessary reforms to the Salvadoran justice system and electoral process can proceed. (Basic data from Notimex, 07/11/90)

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