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## Third Round Of U.N.-mediated Peace Talks: Summary Of Developments

by Deborah Tyroler

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The third round of UN-mediated peace talks between the Salvadoran government and the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) commenced July 20, and were scheduled to end July 24. The talks took place near San Jose, Costa Rica. A summary of developments appears below. (See also CAU 07/20/90 for earlier coverage.) July 20: Salvadoran President Alfredo Cristiani reiterated "the existence of the armed forces is not negotiable," while "quality and quantity" could be discussed at the negotiating table. Cristiani asserted that Salvadoran laws, especially the constitution, were not subject to change in order to accommodate decisions made in the context of the peace talks. July 21: FMLN delegation member Schafik Handal said the rebels planned to pressure the government for a reduction in El Salvador's 54,000-man military force, and demand that the military be purged of officers accused of human rights abuses. He said the FMLN also seeks dismantlement of death squads, and elimination of compulsory military service. July 22: Government delegation member Col. Mauricio Vargas said that an indeterminate number of military officers would retire as a part of a plan to modernize and professionalize the armed forces. This plan is understood, he said, "as more of a cleansing process than an internal purge." Government delegation chief, Justice Minister Oscar Santamaria asserted that his side would break off negotiations if the FMLN launched a nationwide offensive. Handal said that in the absence of a cease-fire agreement, the rebels reserved the right to attack. According to UN mediator, Alvaro de Soto, the negotiations should continue even in the event of a rebel offensive, since the April protocol establishing the agenda for the talks stipulates that neither side should break off the negotiations. July 23: According to a report by Notimex (07/23/90), FMLN proposals were met with counteroffers government consisting of rather cosmetic changes in the organization and jurisdiction of the armed forces. In addition, the government delegation insisted on a cease-fire by the rebels as a pre-condition to these and other reforms. Notimex cited anonymous sources close to the negotiations who said government proposals included a transfer of control over the Treasury Police from the military to the Treasury Ministry, while control of the National Guard would be moved to the Interior Ministry. Next, the National Guard would become subordinate to the Defense Ministry. The FMLN proposed a 10% overall reduction in armed forces personnel, dissolution of the Treasury Police and paramilitary groups, and the prosecution of military personnel accused of human rights abuses. Justice Minister Oscar Santamaria, government delegation chief, said the government's proposal, "satisfies the FMLN's demands almost 100%." Consequently, he added, the FMLN has no excuse for rejecting the government's proposed military reforms. FMLN commander Ana Guadalupe Martinez said the government hopes to persuade the rebels to accept minimal concessions. She added that in contrast, the FMLN proposes disarmament and an end to "our joint intimidation of the civilian population" by both the army and the rebels. (Basic data from Notimex, 07/21/90, 07/23/90; AP, 07/21/90; AFP, 07/23/90)

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