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## **Salvadoran President & Defense Minister Say Rebels' Demands Unreasonable**

*by Deborah Tyroler*

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On Sept. 3, President Alfredo Cristiani said that "it will be very difficult" to arrive at a peace agreement unless the rebels withdraw demands for dismantlement of the military, and subsequent creation of a civilian police force. He asserted that his government will not under any circumstances discuss the existence of the armed forces. Cristiani said the government "is willing to discuss the qualitative and quantitative restructuring of the armed forces and of all institutions requiring strengthening to consolidate democracy." In a Sept. 5 communique, Col. Mauricio Vargas, speaking on behalf of the army high command, said the FMLN was attempting to win the war at the negotiating table. The rebels are trying "to make a take-over viable" with their demands for dismantlement of the Salvadoran armed forces, he added. The communique asserted that in contrast to FMLN claims regarding the military commanders' "lack of will" for peace, the armed forces have served as the "only obstacle" to the rebels' "systematic scheme" of violence to take power. The next round of talks is scheduled for Sept. 13-17 in San Jose, Costa Rica. (Basic data from ACAN-EFE, 09/03/90, 09/05/90)

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