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El Salvador: Reactions To President Cristiani's Suggestion That Rebels Declare Cease-fire

by Deborah Tyroler

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On Oct. 1 in a speech before the UN General Assembly, President Alfredo Cristiani proposed that the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) declare a cease-fire to improve the environment to continue peace talks. A rebel truce would be reciprocated in kind by the government's armed forces, he said. (See CAU 10/03/90 for previous coverage.) Oct. 3: Guillermo Ungo, general secretary of the Revolutionary National Movement (MNR), and former presidential candidate of the Democratic Convergence, described the president's suggestion was not a positive gesture. He said Cristiani wants the FMLN to suspend military operations, while offering no concessions in return. According to Ungo, Cristiani is consistently moving closer to the right's most hard-line positions. For instance, he said, witness the support for Cristiani's proposal publicly expressed by former major Roberto D'Aubuisson. Ungo asserted that it is evident Cristiani lacks the power to fulfill accords signed by his delegates and the rebels in Geneva. In an interview with a local television station, former major Roberto D'Aubuisson, leader of the Nationalist Republican Alliance (ARENA), said that military reductions are "never" going to be negotiated with the FMLN. He said the armed forces have their own plans for a reduction in troop strength to go into effect at the time of a cease-fire. According to D'Aubuisson, the FMLN's adherence to "marxist revolutionary theories" ensures that they will not abandon armed force. The political leader said that President Cristiani's suggestion that the FMLN declare a cease-fire constitutes a "silver bridge" for the rebels to be incorporated into civilian life. Oct. 4: In a communique broadcast by Radio Venceremos, the FMLN said that Cristiani's statement "is an old proposal" aimed at ending the war without first dealing with its causes. The rebel organization said it would stick to the Geneva accords which state that political agreements between the two sides precede a cease-fire. Cristiani's "show" at the United Nations, said the communique, was not directed at the FMLN, but rather the US Senate in an attempt to see military aid to the Salvadoran government continued. According to the FMLN, the war is the outcome of the absence of democracy, militarism, and social injustice. Silencing the weapons of war will be useless as long as a system grounded in "impunity, militarism, concentration of wealth in the hands of a few at the expense of the vast majority's misery and hunger" is left intact. (Basic data from AFP, 10/03/90, 10/04/90; Notimex, 10/04/90)

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