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## **U.S. Speeds Up Disbursement Of Military Aid To El Salvador**

*by Deborah Tyroler*

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On Dec. 7, the US State Department released a statement announcing that disbursement of \$48.1 million in military aid to El Salvador will be accelerated to "allow the Salvadoran government to replace equipment damaged in the recent guerrilla attacks, especially aircraft lost to surface-to-air missiles." The move was authorized by US Secretary of State James Baker. The statement said the State Department was analyzing the guerrillas' use of the missiles and their intransigence in UN-mediated peace talks to determine whether military aid withheld by Congress should be released. In its Dec. 8 issue, the New York Times quoted a State Department official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, as saying that the missiles had come "almost surely from either Cuba or Nicaragua or both." He added that the Bush administration did not yet have hard evidence. Of the total aid package to be quickly disbursed, \$10.6 million will derive from appropriations left over from the 1990 fiscal year, with the remaining \$37.5 million drawn from 1991 appropriations. Only \$10 million in military aid for the rest of fiscal 1991 would remain, unless Congress reverses its decision to withhold 50% of the \$85 million the administration originally requested. Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) leader Mario Lopez told Notimex in Mexico that the US move to speed up delivery of military aid will impede the peace process. He said disbursement of the aid will strengthen the government and improve military morale, but will do nothing to change the scope of the war. In his Dec. 9 homily, Archbishop of San Salvador Arturo Rivera expressed dismay over the US announcement of accelerated military aid disbursement. He drew a direct correlation between US aid and the extension of the conflict. "War requires money," he said, "As soon as the money gets cut off it becomes easier to find a negotiated solution to the war." (Basic data from AFP, 12/07/90, 12/09/90; New York Times, 12/08/90; Notimex, 12/07-09/90; ACAN-EFE, 12/09/90)

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