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## **Update On Salvadoran Peace Talks & Related Developments, December 5 - 10**

*by Deborah Tyroler*

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Dec. 5: In San Miguel de Allende, Guanajuato state, Mexico, Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) spokesperson Rebeca Palacios said that the government delegation had returned to the current round of talks "vacillating and obstructing" progress. She added that the government delegation was attempting to revert to positions which had been resolved as part of the New York accords. FMLN spokesperson Roberto Canas said the rebel delegation had introduced discussion of socio-economic issues outlined in the New York accords, including agrarian reform, land tenure in areas under rebel control, creation of an economic concertacion forum, and participation of former rebel combatants in the political arena. In a communique, the Christian Democrat Party (PDC) said party participation in a demonstration scheduled for Dec. 8 in San Salvador, and billed as a show of support for the peace talks, would be inappropriate and "could have a negative impact on the peace process." The PDC asserted said in order to show genuine support of the peace process, event organizers should have invited participation by all political parties and civic/activist organizations. Instead, the statement asserted, certain groups were attempting to "manipulate" the event, turning it into a display of support for the armed forces "in open contradiction to the spirit of a national march for peace." Dec. 6: In New York, A UN spokesperson told reporters that Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar had requested moving the Salvadoran peace talks to UN headquarters next week. Perez de Cuellar urged negotiators to "intensify their efforts so that when the talks move to New York the issues will have been substantially narrowed to a point where final decisions can be expeditiously adopted." Rebel spokesperson Canas said the FMLN viewed the secretary general's call with "great satisfaction," and believed the move increases the probability of a peace agreement by year-end. Presidency Minister Oscar Santamaria, who heads the government delegation, said a premature move to New York would be a mistake. According to Santamaria, a return to New York would be "important and desirable" only after successful resolution of negotiations on the future of the armed forces, the civilian national police force, and certain economic and social welfare issues. Once negotiators have reached terms on the above issues, he added, the two sides could deal with cease-fire accord conditions and a timetable for implementing all elements of the peace agreement. Dec. 7: Spokespersons for the Permanent National Debate Committee (CPDN) and the Democratic Popular Unity (UPD, a coalition of campesino organizations) said members would participate in the Dec. 8 demonstrations as a show of "support for the negotiations." Dec. 8: In San Salvador, tens of thousands of government supporters participated in the "march for peace" organized by the armed forces, the Nationalist Republican Alliance (ARENA) and businesspersons. Organizers contracted buses to bring people in from rural communities. March organizers quoted by the Agence France-Presse said about 150,000 people attended the event. Other observers estimated the number of participants at about 60,000. Demonstrators chanted pro-military slogans. Some of the marchers shot at an effigy of an FMLN rebel, and others raised white flags. Military helicopters following the march flew overhead. Government troops turned away a group of about 5,000 supporters of the CPDN who were attempting to join the march. FMLN rebels abandoned plans to participate after the government issued threats that they would be arrested if they made

an appearance in San Salvador. The Agence France-Presse cited FMLN leaders as saying that the army had paid marchers US\$4 per person to participate and also provided free transportation to and from the capital. Dec. 9: Canas told reporters the talks would recess beginning Dec. 10, and that on Dec. 14, the two delegations would travel to New York. According to Canas, top-level representatives on both sides will participate in the upcoming round, tentatively set for Dec. 15. President Alfredo Cristiani is expected to make an appearance. FMLN general command members Shafick Handal, Joaquin Villalobos, Ferman Cienfuegos, Leonel Gonzalez and Roberto Roca are to head the rebel delegation. Canas said the FMLN expects the next round to be the final one, and the rebel delegation plans to remain in New York until completion of a definitive accord. In San Salvador, Vice President Francisco Merino asserted that the move to New York was premature, and could result in the signing of incomplete agreements. Merino said Salvadorans and other interested parties must be wary of Perez de Cuellar's "temptation to figure among the peacemakers" before his mandate as UN secretary general expires Dec. 31. In statements to Radio Catolica in Managua, US Ambassador to Nicaragua Harry Shlaudeman asserted that the FMLN continues to receive weapons shipments from Nicaragua. Shlaudeman said two shipments destined for the Salvadoran rebels had been intercepted at the Honduran-Nicaraguan border, but did not specify when the interdictions occurred. Following a meeting with FMLN commander Joaquin Villalobos, Nicaraguan Presidency Minister Antonio Lacayo denied that weapons for the FMLN are being transported through Nicaragua. Villalobos said the US ambassador's statements were aimed at derailing peace negotiations. Dec. 11: CPDN spokesperson Edgar Palacios announced plans for a peace demonstration to take place Dec. 14 in San Salvador. Guillermo Rojas, of the Salvadoran National Workers Unity (UNTS), said the march would be a "final show of support for the peace process." Juan Jose Huezo, National Federation of Syndicated Workers (FENASTRAS) leader, said FENASTRAS also plans to participate in the march. (Basic data from Associated Press, 12/06/91; Spanish news service EFE, Deutsche Press Agentur, 12/08/91; Agence France-Presse, 12/05-10/91; Notimex, ACAN-EFE, 12/05/91, 12/09/91, 12/11/91)

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