Salvadoran Peace Accords: Summary Of Events

Deborah Tyroler
Salvadoran Peace Accords: Summary Of Events

by Deborah Tyroler
Category/Department: General
Published: Friday, January 17, 1992

Jan. 10: Roberto Canas, spokesperson for the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN), said figures contained in the government proposal for a timetable on troop reduction were unrealistic. According to Canas, "The government has submitted a plan to reduce troop levels by 50.2% in 24 months. Meanwhile, the military hierarchy reports current troop strength at 63,175." The government's intent, said Canas, is to justify a "reduction" to 31,000 troops, when in reality armed forces personnel total only 35,000. [The figure used in negotiations thus far has been 55,000 troops, including the Treasury Police, the National Guard and all other public security forces.] The rebel spokesperson pointed out that the army had recently launched a massive recruitment campaign aimed at swelling the ranks as much as possible before being forced to cut back. [See CAU 01/10/92 for report on army recruitment efforts.] Canas said the 1990 army roster listed a total of 2,086 officers. Yet the government's proposal calls for an officer corps of 2,320 after reductions under the peace accords. Jan. 11: Oscar Santamaria, head of the government negotiating team, told reporters that the government’s proposal calls for dismantlement of the elite Arce, Atlacatl, Atonal, Belloso and Bracamonte battalions over a 24-month period beginning Feb. 1, 1992. He said that during the first six months of the two-year armed forces reduction program, 19,000 soldiers would be retired, and in the subsequent 18 months, slightly more than 12,000. Canas said the FMLN wants the elite battalions dismantled in nine months to coincide with rebel demobilization. Jan. 13: In a report to the UN Security Council, UN Secretary General Butros Butros Ghali proposed sending 1,000 peacekeepers to participate in the UN observer mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL). The presence of UN peacekeepers, he said, would "allow the Salvadoran people to feel sufficiently secure during the delicate phase of transition from armed confrontation to national reconciliation." According to Butros Ghali, the peacekeepers would work with government troops to "avoid intimidation, reprisals or other violations of the civil rights of all sectors of the population." He added that the UN police division would be phased out as the new civilian police force (Policia Nacional Civil-PNC) becomes operational. Next, Butros Ghali called for an extension of ONUSAL's mandate to include verification of compliance with the peace accords. ONUSAL is currently limited to monitoring respect for human rights. Jan. 14: Government and rebel negotiators released a joint statement announcing that they had reached agreement on all topics left pending on Dec. 31. The UN Security Council approved Butros Gali’s request to send 1,000 UN peacekeepers to El Salvador to work with ONUSAL in verification of accord compliance. The UN contingent is to include both military and civilian personnel. In addition, the Security Council extended ONUSAL’s mandate to Oct. 31. The cost of the UN operation in El Salvador will surpass US$58.9 million for the first six months. UN military observers are to be deployed to assist in separating government troops and rebel combatants at the beginning of formal cease-fire on Feb. 1. Next, UN personnel will work with authorities involved in organizing the PNC. Jan. 16: In Mexico City, UN Secretary General Butros Ghali presided over the formal signing of the peace accords. The 94-page treaty constitutes a detailed blueprint for ending the civil war, and for reorganizing Salvadoran politics and society. [Selected highlights of the accord timetable are summarized in a separate article, this issue (01/17/92).] Witnesses included the presidents of Mexico, Costa Rica, Colombia, Nicaragua, Honduras, Guatemala, Panama, Spain and Venezuela; the Cuban Foreign Minister and US Secretary...
of State; and, over 200 foreign dignitaries. Signatories representing the government included President Alfredo Cristiani, Presidency Minister Oscar Santamaria, Interior Minister Col. Juan Antonio Martinez Varela, armed forces assistant chief of staff Col. Mauricio Vargas, attorney Hernan Contreras, and presidential adviser David Escobar Galindo. Signatories for the FMLN were Shafik Handal, Salvador Sanchez Ceren, Francisco Jovel, Joaquin Villalobos, Eduardo Sancho, Salvador Samayoa, Marta Valladares, Ana Guadalupe Martínez, Dagoberto Gonzalez and Roberto Canas. A declaration of support for the Salvadoran peace process was signed by the following heads of state: Carlos Salinas de Gortari (Mexico), Felipe Gonzalez (Spain), Cesar Gaviria (Colombia), Carlos Andres Perez (Venezuela), Jorge Serrano (Guatemala), Rafael Callejas (Honduras), Rafael Angel Calderon (Costa Rica), Violeta Barrios de Chamorro (Nicaragua), and Guillermo Endara (Panama). (Basic data from Salpress, ACAN- EFE, 01/10/92; Agence France-Presse, 01/10/92, 01/11/92, 01/13-16/92; Associated Press, 01/13/92, 01/14/92, 01/16/92; Spanish news service EFE, 01/10/92, 01/13/92, 01/14/92, 01/16/92; Notimex, 01/13-16/92)

-- End --