Salvadoran Legislative Assembly Ratifies Constitutional Reforms Subordinating Army To Civilian Control

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On Jan. 30, the Legislative Assembly voted unanimously to ratify constitutional amendments subordinating the armed forces to civilian control. Under the amendments, which went into effect immediately, the military's mandate is restricted to defense of national sovereignty and territory. The army is now defined as "a permanent institution at the service of the nation, obedient, professional, apolitical and non-deliberative." The reforms prohibit military personnel from carrying out politically-related intelligence functions. As commander in chief, the president is empowered to order the army to "reestablish domestic order." However, the legislature exercises ultimate authority in ending such military intervention in the domestic context. The legislation formally establishes the Civil National Police (PNC) to substitute for the National Guard, National Police and Treasury Police. The PNC will be the sole national force assigned domestic public security functions. Next, the Legislative Assembly formally approved legislation creating the National Peace Commission (COPAZ), which will oversee compliance with the peace accords by the government and the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN). COPAZ members include two government and two FMLN representatives, plus one representative from each of the political parties with seats in the national legislature. Archbishop of San Salvador Arturo Rivera y Damas and a delegate from the UN observer mission to El Salvador (ONUSAL) have observer status in COPAZ. (Basic data from Agence France-Presse, ACAN-EFE, Spanish news service EFE, 01/30/92; Chinese news service Xinhua, 01/31/92)

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