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Summary Of Developments: Implementation Of Salvadoran Peace Accords & Related Events

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Jan. 30: Salpress reported that at least four persons were shot and 12 arrested when National Guard troops forcibly evicted 200 peasants from the Los Planchos Cooperative. The cooperative is located on La Concordia Hacienda outside of Jiquilisco, Usulutan department. The armed forces press office (COPREFA) later confirmed that 12 persons had been arrested in what was described as an "illegal land occupation." The National Cooperative Federation (FENACOA) denounced the incident, and reported that two of the wounded were in critical condition. FENACOA observed that La Concordia Hacienda exceeds the 245-ha. constitutional limit on single-owner property holdings. Under the peace accords, landless agricultural workers are to gain access to such "excess" land. Furthermore, FENACOA noted, the accords state that no evictions are to take place until property claims are settled.

Feb. 4: According to a communiqué by the Salvadoran Women's Association (AMS), an attack on FENACOA members in Usulutan department resulted in the death of one person and two others wounded. The incident occurred near Jiquilisco when unidentified assailants boarded a bus, and opened fire on the FENACOA members. The latter were en route to Usulutan, capital of Usulutan department, to investigate the detention of two cooperative members following the eviction at Los Planchos.

Feb. 7: President Alfredo Cristiani accused the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) of instigating ongoing "illegal land takeovers." He asserted that since July 3, when the FMLN agreed in peace talks to suspend support for such activity, there had been 220 land invasions. Next, Cristiani said FMLN reports on the number of rebel combatants and weapons held by rebels were dubious. He added that the government would ONUSAL verification of FMLN accounts. According to FMLN commander Salvador Sanchez Ceren, rebel combatants number 6,000, and weapons, 4,000.

Feb. 8: FMLN leader Joaquin Villalobos said Cristiani's statements regarding Front support for land takeovers were "totally false." According to Villalobos, the blame for violating the peace accords lies with the government since it supports the forced eviction of peasants from cooperatives. Mario Aguinada, National Peace Commission (COPAZ) president and Nationalist Democratic Union (UDN) leader, told reporters that COPAZ members had reached agreement regarding five of the eight members to be appointed to a COPAZ subcommittee charged with overseeing the establishment of the Civilian National Police (PNC). The five are Joaquin Villalobos (FMLN), Juan Jose Domenech (Nationalist Republican Alliance-ARENA), Pedro Hernandez (Christian Authentic Movement-MAC), Sigfrido Reyes (Nationalist Democratic Union-UDN), and Oscar Fernandez (Democratic Convergence).

Pierre Gastelu, director of ONUSAL's police division, told reporters that the concentration of government troops and rebels into 150 designated enclaves has been completed. Gastelu said ONUSAL will act in a supervisory and monitoring role for six months, or the period during which the National Police is to be dismantled and the PNC established. Gastelu said that the ONUSAL police division will consist of 470 foreign police officers, and not 631 as specified by the UN Security Council. The number was reduced, he added, because additional Spanish-speaking police officers were not available.

Feb. 9: Aguinada expressed concern over
repeated delays affecting COPAZ's mandate, particularly regarding land tenure issues. He said
government representatives on the commission are attempting to force "renegotiation" of issues
which had been resolved as part of the peace accords. Feb. 10: The final three members to the
COPAZ subcommittee on establishing the PNC were appointed: Col. Manuel Rivas (government
representative), Adolfo Blandon (National Conciliation Party-PCN), and Oscar Castro (Christian
Democrat Party-PDC). In an interview broadcast on local television, Villalobos said conflicts over
land tenure were creating a dangerous situation for the peace process. He added, "We are getting
bogged down in the land issue and this already constitutes a setback in compliance with the peace
accords." According to Villalobos, further setbacks in resolving land tenure issues would produce
delays in implementation of other components of the accord, and ultimately to stretching out the
entire implementation process. Daily newspaper Diario de Hoy reported that landowner Hector
Castro said a group of people "armed with machetes" had taken over his farm, located north of the
capital. Feb. 11: Villalobos said, "The government is presenting the land problem in confrontational
terms and the National Guard and National Police continue their activities as before...We think
the government and army should be careful, should use more prudence. They are going against
majority public sentiment, which advocates searching for the best solution to the [land tenure]
problem." Deputy defense minister and COPAZ member Gen. Orlando Zepeda asserted, "We are
not making anything up. New land takeovers are taking place every day." Since July, said Zepeda, a
total of 268 land invasions had been reported. Feb. 12: COPAZ spokespersons said the commission
had finally reached agreement on the eight members of a subcommittee charged with overseeing
implementation of several socio-economic components of the accords, including land tenure issues.
(Basic data from Salpress 01/30/92; 02/04/92 communique by Salvadoran Women's Association
(AMS); Agence France-Presse, 02/10/92, 02/11/92; Agencia Centroamericana de Noticias-Spanish
news service EFE, 02/07-10/92, 02/12/92)