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

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Sept. 8: In a press conference, 18 Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) field commanders warned of the likelihood the peace process will suffer additional delays if the government fails to immediately allocate funds for the acquisition of lands for former rebel combatants. Commander Rogelio Martinez rejected government claims that it does not have sufficient funds for such purchases by pointing out that in recent months, the administration of President Alfredo Cristiani has allocated several million dollars worth of credits to agricultural producers. Sept. 9: In a San Jose (Costa Rica) press conference, rebel leaders Jose Velasquez and Mauricio Aleman warned that the FMLN will not be able to comply with the agreed-upon timetable for demobilization of rebel combatants if the government does not fulfill its commitments regarding the distribution of land to former guerrillas. Velasquez added that continued delays in establishing the National Civil Police (Policia Nacional Civil, PNC) will also hinder rebel demobilization since a significant portion of those waiting to leave rebel ranks are expecting to enter the new police force. Aleman asserted that the US, which has agreed to provide the bulk of funding for purchase of lands, "has imposed a series of unacceptable conditions" for releasing the funds. Among these, he said, was a stipulation that land parcels be distributed on an individual basis rather than collectively, as the FMLN prefers. Aleman also asserted that the next stage in FMLN troop demobilization should be carried out "in correspondence with" a purge of the armed forces, as mandated in the peace accords. He added, "the feasibility of the peace process depends on balanced compliance by both sides...the delays in compliance have allowed a small but powerful sector of the rightist oligarchy to attempt to undermine the peace process itself." Following a five-month delay, representatives from the government, private sector, and labor formally inaugurated the "concertacion" forum, as mandated by the accords. Delay in commencing the forum was due to a boycott by private sector representatives. Initial agenda items include discussions regarding programs for socio-economic development and reforms to the country's labor code. Those in attendance included delegates from the Ministries of Planning, Labor, Education, Economy, Agriculture, Health and Housing, and the Central Bank, as well as from about 100 private sector groups, most of which are affiliated with the National Association of Private Enterprise (Asociacion Nacional de la Empresa Privada, ANEP), and about 100 trade union, peasant and professional organizations. The Permanent National Debate Committee (Comite Permanente del Debate Nacional, CPDN), which brings together about 80 political, labor and civic opposition groups, announced that on Sept. 15 it would initiate protests in San Salvador over the government's recent decisions to implement a value added tax (IVA) and to raise public transportation and utility rates. Sept. 10: According to diplomatic sources in New York, UN Secretary General Butros Butros Ghali announced during a closed-door meeting of the Security Council that he would ask the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to provide financing for the purchase of lands for demobilized guerrillas. The session was convened to discuss a wide range of issues, including the conflicts in Yugoslavia, Cambodia and El Salvador. In San Salvador, the Armed Forces Press Committee (Comite de Prensa de la Fuerza Armada, COPREFA) released a communique charging that the FMLN had plans to carry out a

series of "disturbances" in protest over recent government economic measures. According to the communique, "the activities involve street occupations, blocking the circulation of vehicles and other provocations in San Salvador and the departments of Santa Ana, San Miguel, Usulután and Chalatenango." In the afternoon, CPDN member organizations erected barricades and blocked traffic for several hours in different parts of the country. By evening, the protests were suspended and no incidents of violence were reported. Sept. 11: In a communique, the UN Observer Mission (ONUSAL) announced that the new director of its human rights division, Peruvian national Diego Garcia Sayan, will officially assume his post in early October. In a press conference in Rome, Italy, Schafik Handal, a member of the FMLN general command, stated that the top leadership of the Salvadoran armed forces currently represents the principal obstacle to implementation of the peace process. Sept. 12: Peasant groups affiliated with the CPDN blocked traffic on highways in several locations around the country to demand a resumption of the agrarian reform and land distribution programs. Sept. 14: In a press conference, President Alfredo Cristiani stated "the government has complied with all its [peace process] commitments on the stipulated dates." Cristiani said he is opposed to any extension beyond the original date of Oct. 31 for fulfillment of all aspects of the accords. He added that FMLN demands for the government provision of lands and resources for its demobilized combatants "are totally beyond the government's possibilities." Raul Garcia Prieto, a leader of the ruling Nationalist Republican Alliance (Alianza Republicana Nacionalista, ARENA) and president of the Financiera Nacional de Tierras Agrícolas (FINATA) accused the US of "refusing to provide financial support for the peace process" and of "giving a slap in the face to Central America" by abandoning the region to its fate. According to Prieto, "Washington invested millions of dollars in promoting wars in El Salvador and the rest of Central America and now it does not bother to provide the economic aid required for the peace process...[they] used the contras in Nicaragua and now they want nothing to do with that country, nor with Honduras, nor with El Salvador." As a result, he said, the entire region could face "social explosions." He added that the Central American nations should design their own policies "without the influence of United States embassies." (Sources: Agence France-Presse, 09/08-10/92, 09/14/92; Agencia Centroamericana de Prensa-Spanish News Service EFE, 09/09- 12/92, 09/14/92)

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