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Salvadoran Peace Monitor



No. 1, 19 February 1992

Summary of Developments

Despite lingering tensions and mutual suspicions, the peace process has proceeded fairly smoothly since the formal cease-fire began on 1 February. The UN-supervised separation of forces is on schedule, notwithstanding confusion over who will provide supplies for FMLN personnel encamped in the cease-fire zones and a dispute over the accuracy of the arms inventory presented to the UN observer force (ONUSAL) by the FMLN. The Commission for the Consolidation of Peace (COPAZ) has agreed to appoint a subcommission to troubleshoot issues involving the new National Civilian Police, and, after several days of debate, has established a similar group to tackle land reform issues. Meanwhile, the legislature issued a clarification of the hastily written amnesty law affirming the authority of the Truth Commission to investigate significant human rights cases from the past decade. The accord's first serious test--the deadline for a 20 percent demobilization of the FMLN--is still two months away. [REDACTED]

Cease-Fire Issues

Disarmament and demobilization: The initial stages of the cease-fire are proceeding smoothly.

- FMLN and government forces met the 6 February deadline for Phase One of the separation of forces without incident.
- During Phase Two, which is to be completed by 2 March, FMLN forces will concentrate in 15 zones, while the Army withdraws to some 62 areas throughout the country. [REDACTED]

Responsibility for the care and feeding of FMLN personnel restricted to their zones has emerged as the first problem related to the cease-fire. Guerrilla forces are providing their own supplies during Phase One. [REDACTED] it is unclear who--the UN, the government, or the FMLN--will provide logistical support during Phase Two. Most of the guerrilla zones are isolated and lack adequate facilities.

- Senior ONUSAL military officials are concerned about poor sanitary conditions in the zones. FMLN leaders told [REDACTED] that the 500 guerrillas near Suchitoto are beginning to suffer from dysentery and that cholera could break out. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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Cease-fire violations: Most ONUSAL observers are in place, and no violations have been reported since the formal cease-fire began on 1 February.

█ reports that approximately 340 of ONUSAL's planned 370 military observers had arrived as of 4 February.

-- On 6 February, guerrillas in Cuscatlan Department were providing locations of minefields to unidentified officials, probably from ONUSAL. █

Tensions and distrust persist, however, and the risk of random clashes will be high until the separation of forces is completed.

-- The timely arrival of ONUSAL observers narrowly averted a clash near the Cerron Grande Dam in Chalatenango Department in early February. Guerrillas threatened to fire on an Army patrol that they claimed had entered their zone.

█ several incidents in which guerrillas taunted members of the military. The rebels also orchestrated a demonstration outside the 5th Brigade headquarters in San Vicente.

-- The government and the FMLN have accused each other of providing ONUSAL with inaccurate information, █ ARENA leader Armando Calderon Sol accused the FMLN of turning in incomplete weapons inventories*, while guerrilla commander Joaquin Villalobos accused the government of inflating military manpower figures.


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█ illegal land seizures by pro-FMLN peasants have become a serious irritant to the peace process. The government argues that the seizures violate the peace accord, as well as a July 1991 agreement with peasant groups. The FMLN, meanwhile, maintains that its supporters have a right to unoccupied land in its strongholds, █

* See Special Analysis section for further details.



Political and Military Reform Issues

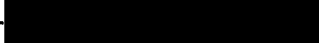


Status of reforms: COPAZ, charged with hammering out details and resolving disputes related to the accord, acquired legal status on 1 February.

- The opening ceremony drew some 8,000 people, and most speakers--including FMLN Commander Joaquin Villalobos--emphasized the need for national reconciliation. 



On 6 February, COPAZ appointed a subcommission to handle all issues pertaining to the formation of the new National Civilian Police--one of the government's more daunting tasks.



Government activities: San Salvador has been active on several fronts to demonstrate its commitment to peace.

-  President Cristiani kicked off the National Reconstruction Plan on 2 February in Cabanas Department, distributing nearly \$2 million to local mayors for rebuilding projects.
- The legislature on 6 February issued a "clarification" closing loopholes in the recent amnesty law.  some legal experts had argued that, under the law, judges could have granted amnesty to the perpetrators in some notorious human rights abuses before the Truth Commission had an opportunity to review the cases.
- On 15 February, the legislature selected the five-man Supreme Electoral Tribunal, which will oversee the 1994 elections. 

FMLN political transformation: The FMLN has wasted little time increasing its political profile, although it has not finalized plans to form a party.

- The insurgents have staged several well-attended rallies, formed political committees, and announced they will convene a political congress in the near future.
- They also have increased funding for their front groups,  and are soliciting financial aid from friendly groups abroad. 

Instances of Political Violence

No confirmed cases of political violence have been reported since the firebombing of vehicles belonging to foreign journalists on New Year's Eve.

- [REDACTED] however, that the ultra-right Salvadoran Anti-Communist Front (FAS) recently renewed its death threats against the leader of a prominent leftist group that lobbies for displaced persons. [REDACTED]

Other Developments

[REDACTED] Salvadorans across the political spectrum are struck by the unusually tranquil atmosphere and the small, but tangible, signs that the war is over.

- The presence of armed troops in the capital is less pervasive.
- Sandbags, speed bumps, and guard posts have been removed from most city streets.
- The director of the Catholic Church's human rights office--a frequent, often shrill, critic of the military and government--acknowledges that fewer abuses are occurring.

[REDACTED]

Foreign assistance is resuming.

- The FMLN announced on 3 February that the Norwegian government had pledged \$2 million to the national reconstruction effort.
- Press reports indicate the German government announced it will resume its economic assistance program to El Salvador. German aid was suspended two years ago in the wake of the murder by government troops of six Jesuit priests, their cook, and her daughter.
- The French have agreed to provide \$500,000 worth of food to the government, according to press reports.
- Praising San Salvador's responsible fiscal, monetary, and trade policies, the IMF recently announced plans to provide a 14-month, \$60 million standby agreement that will boost President Cristiani's macroeconomic reform program. [REDACTED]

According to press reports, FMLN leader Shafik Handal traveled to Cuba on 7 February, apparently to discuss recent developments in El Salvador with Cuban officials. [REDACTED]

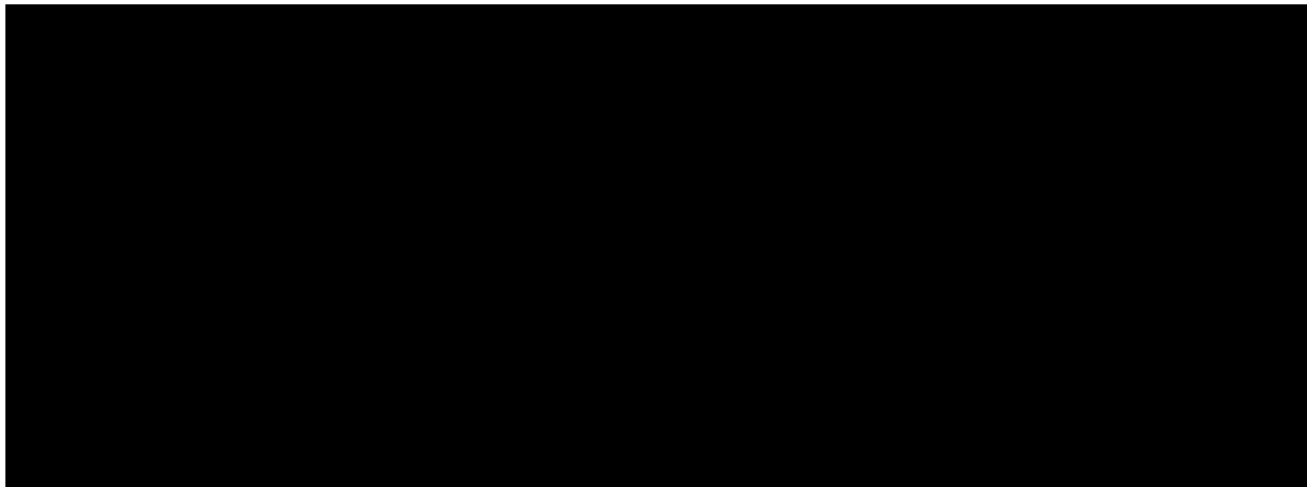
Upcoming Issues

The peace accord calls for the disbanding of the Treasury Police and the National Guard by 2 March. Personnel from these forces will be transferred to the Army. [REDACTED]

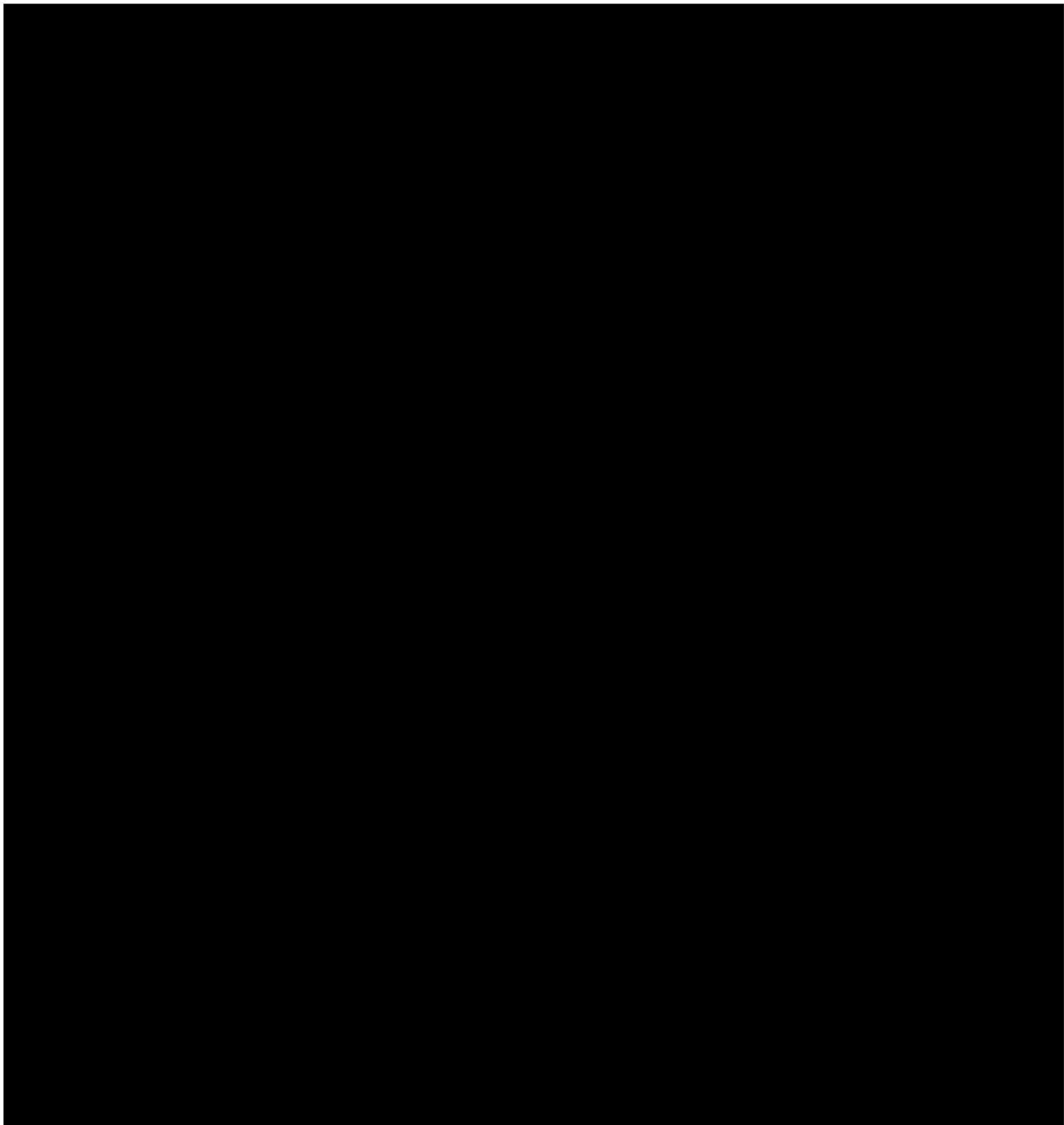
The government announced it will release 80 political prisoners on 1 March. [REDACTED]

Ernesto Arbizu, the National Civilian Police Coordinator, recently announced that in mid-March he will begin selecting students for the new police academy, which is due to open on 1 May. [REDACTED]

Special Analysis: The FMLN On Guard



Given the FMLN's long experience in logistics, we believe the guerrillas will be able to maintain arms caches despite the presence of UN observers. Moreover, the UN does not appear to be prepared aggressively to follow up charges that arms have been hidden. While these efforts will buoy the FMLN's confidence, they also will feed the government's mistrust and increase the potential for cease-fire violations and banditry. [REDACTED]



APPROVED FOR RELEASE
DATE: MAR 2001