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THIS WEEK IN EL SALVADOR ... Twenty-eight U.S. Senators urged President Cristiani not to pardon the two officers convicted in the Jesuit case. Peace talks reopened in Mexico City. The National Assembly ratified judicial reforms to the constitution. Unionists commemorated the second anniversary of the 1989 bombing of the FENASTRAS headquarters. Police seized \$100 million in cocaine in the port of Acajutla. The first session of the Central American Parliament was convened in Guatemala.

SENATORS OPPOSE AMNESTY FOR JESUIT KILLERS

In an October 31 letter to President Alfredo Cristiani, 28 U.S. Senators expressed their "concern" and opposition to any amnesty for the two officers convicted on September 28 of the November 1989 slaying of six Jesuits, their housekeeper and her daughter at the Central American University (UCA) in San Salvador.

"Providing an amnesty to the only military officers ever convicted of human rights violations in El Salvador," said the Senators, "would be contrary to the spirit of the Geneva Conventions and would raise serious questions about El Salvador's commitment to the rule of law."

The Senators drew a distinction between an amnesty "which permits combatants to lay down their weapons without fear that they will be prosecuted for their participation in acts of war," which they called "a necessary and desirable part of a legitimate peace process," and the murder of the Jesuits, who were "helpless, unarmed civilians, not combatants killed in the heat of battle."

Concluding their letter the Senators urged Cristiani to "uphold the sentences of those convicted of the murder of the Jesuits, and to pursue justice for all other members of the military who were involved in authorizing or planning this heinous crime."

The letter was signed by both Republicans and Democrats, including Senators Joseph R. Biden, Jr. (D-NJ), Alan Cranston (D-CA), Alfonse D'Amato (R-NY), Dennis

DeConcini (D-AZ), Tom Harkin (D-IO), Edward Kennedy (D-MA), Albert Gore (D-TN), Mark O. Hatfield (R-OR), Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-NY), Barbara Mikulski (D-MD), and Claiborne Pell (D-RI).

Biden, Cranston, Kennedy and Pell are the chairs of the Senate Judiciary, Veterans Affairs, Labor and Human Resources, and Foreign Relations Committees. DeConcini is a sponsor of legislation granting Salvadoran refugees legal residency in the U.S. Hatfield is the ranking Republican member of the Appropriations Committee, which oversees foreign aid allocations, including to El Salvador. DeConcini, Moynihan and Gore are moderate Democrats and are key "swing" votes in the Senate.

In a similar letter dispatched on October 31 to U.S. Secretary of State James A. Baker III, four key members of the U.S. Congress requested a Presidential determination on the course of the investigation into the Jesuit case and the prosecution of the defendants accused of their deaths.

Pointing out that such a determination is required by law, and that no such determination has been made this year, the officials called upon President Bush to provide a report by January 1, 1992 on the investigation and the trial.

The report, they said, should include a determination as to whether the Salvadoran government had conducted a "thorough and professional investigation and prosecution" in the case, a legal analysis of the verdicts reached, and "the options, if

any for further legal proceedings against those indicted for the murders but not convicted, as well as those senior officers who may have given the orders for the killings."

Finally, said the four officials, the reports "should also set forth the Administrations's justification for not terminating all military assistance to El Salvador" in light of the outcome of the Jesuit trial.

The letter was signed by Senators Patrick Leahy (D-VT) and Christopher Dodd (D-MA), and Representatives David Obey (D-WI) and Joe Moakley (D-MA).

In related news on the Congressional front, the U.S. House of Representatives on October 30 voted 262 to 159 against a \$25 billion Foreign Aid bill for 1992. The vote had little effect on actual foreign aid expenditures, which will continue until March 31, 1992 under a continuing resolution passed October 24.

In testimony October 30 before the Western Hemispheric Subcommittee of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs Bernard Aronson called further restrictions on aid "incomprehensible."

Such restrictions, he said, "could generate a division in the FMLN (Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front) between those who support the process and those who want to continue the war, resulting in more combat."

Aronson stated that the signing of a peace treaty before Christmas was likely, and called on Congress to "prepare now in cooperation with the United Nations to help consolidate and guarantee the peace."

Aronson revealed that the Agency for International Development (AID) of the U.S. State Department had already drawn up a reconstruction plan for El Salvador, and stressed the importance of Congressional cooperation with post-war development.

Meanwhile, Representative Mel Levine (D-CA) has introduced legislation to transfer \$10 million of 1992's \$85 million in aid to El Salvador's military to a "demobilization and transition" fund, and transfer half of the remaining military aid to economic projects if the two of-

ficers convicted in the Jesuit case receive an amnesty.

Representative Jim McDermott (D-WA), sponsor of legislation to cut off all military aid to El Salvador, announced that his bill has acquired 140 co-sponsors. Eighty-eight more are needed for a majority. (ER 10/31; IPS 10/29-30; RS 10/30; WP 10/31; WC-CAS Report)

TALKS REOPEN IN MEXICO CITY

Representatives of the Salvadoran government and the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) met on November 3 to begin what many observers are predicting will be the last round of negotiations before a final peace accord is signed.

"This is the beginning of the end, and the end is very near," said government negotiator and Deputy Chief of Staff of the Salvadoran Armed Forces Colonel Mauricio Ernesto Vargas.

"I think the possibilities of achieving an end to the armed conflict lie around the end of the month of November," he speculated.

Other representatives declined to speak to the press, citing the confidentiality of the talks at this stage.

Earlier, the National Commission for the Consolidation of Peace (COPAZ) concluded two days of meetings in Mexico City on October 26 by approving a series of internal operating rules for the pre-ceasefire period of its existence. During the meetings COPAZ also received proposals concerning benefits for wounded and disabled veterans from both sides of the war, and considered matters pertaining to the construction of the National Civil Police (PNC). (SP 10/27; ER 10/31; RS 11/3)

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY PASSES JUDICIAL REFORMS

On October 31 the National Assembly of El Salvador voted unanimously to ratify a series of constitutional amendments in the area of judicial reform.

The reforms were passed after the ruling Nationalist Republican Alliance (ARENA) party and the opposition parties in the Assembly reached a consensus on the particulars of the amendments during a

week of behind the scenes political debate and maneuver.

Speaking to the issue of passage, the president of the Assembly and ARENA party member Luis Roberto Angulo Samayoa stated that the reforms "are imperatively necessary to improve the organic functioning of the state and of Salvadoran society."

The proposed reforms would give the National Assembly the power to appoint members of the judiciary. Presently, such appointments are made by a council selected by the President.

The reforms are part of a package of constitutional amendments which were ratified by the outgoing Assembly on April 30. Salvadoran law requires that constitutional amendments be ratified by two consecutive Assemblies.

The Assembly agreed on July 24 to consider reforms dealing with human rights, electoral reforms, the judiciary, and the role of the Armed Forces, in that order. Human rights reforms were passed on September 11, and electoral reforms on September 24.

ARENA party legislators have refused to consider passage of military reforms until a ceasefire has been signed.

Passage of the judicial reforms was delayed for a week at the request of ARENA officials. Initially, ARENA deputies refused to vote for the reforms to the judiciary unless they were included in a "package" which would also contain provision for a death penalty and the privatization of the National Telecommunications Administration (ANTEL) and the Salvadoran Post Office. Faced with united opposition to their proposal for linking the death penalty and privatization to judicial reform, ARENA eventually dropped its demand, clearing the way for passage.

The judicial reforms become law on November 20. (SP 10/23-24, 10/31, 11/1; ER 10/24, 10/31; FBIS 10/23)

JUSTICE SOUGHT IN FENASTRAS MASSACRE

Members of the Salvadoran labor movement observed the second anniversary of the October 31, 1989 bombing of the National Trade Union Federation of Salvadoran Workers (FENASTRAS) headquarters

with a religious service at El Rosario Church in San Salvador followed by a procession to La Bermeja cemetery, where nine of the victims are buried.

FENASTRAS leader Febe Elizabeth Velasquez and nine others died in the bombing. More than 30 people were wounded. The federation blames the military for the explosion.

FENASTRAS Secretary-General Juan Jose Huerdo said evidence against the military included the fact that "Days before (the bombing), the government and Armed Forces accused our colleague, Febe Elizabeth Velasquez, over the airwaves, of being a member of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN)."

Huerdo alleged that the government "has not made any effort, so we have taken the case to the ILO (International Labor Organization) and asked U.S. congressmembers to help us bring this to trial."

The National Union of Workers and Peasants (UNOC) in a paid newspaper ad the same day demanded that investigation of the massacre be a top priority for the "Truth Commission" established under the April, 1991 Mexico City Accords between the government and the FMLN.

October 31 was named "Day of the Unionist" last year by El Salvador's National Assembly. (SP 11/1; ER 10/31)

CRIPDES LEADER RETURNS TO EL SALVADOR

Mirtala Lopez, secretary of human rights and legal affairs of the Christian Committee for the Displaced of El Salvador (CRIPDES), returned to El Salvador from the United States on October 30 following a month-long stay abroad.

Lopez arrived in the U.S. on October 2 after fleeing to Mexico the previous week in the wake of four death threats from a far-right organization known as the Salvadoran Anti-Communist Front (FAS).

Out of concern for her safety, three people from the U.S. accompanied Lopez on her return to El Salvador, where the group was escorted to the CRIPDES office in San Salvador by members of the media and a U.S. Embassy official, among others.

Lopez' companions were last-minute replacements for a delegation of five

other people from the U.S. who had planned to accompany the humanitarian worker on her return but were denied visas by the Salvadoran Embassy in Washington, D.C.

The five people denied visas were Auxiliary Bishop of Detroit Thomas J. Gumbleton; Sister Alice Fairchild, O.P., of the Diocese of Rockville Center, New York; Father Patrick F. McManamon, S.J., of Detroit; Hector Lucena, an aide to U.S. Representative Thomas S. Foglietta (D-PA); and Karen M. Masterson, an aide to Representative Tony Hall (D-OH).

The three persons who ended up accompanying Lopez had prior permission to visit El Salvador.

On October 30 a spokesperson at the Salvadoran Embassy could give no reason for denying the visas to the delegation.

Bishop Gumbleton, meanwhile, said the Salvadoran ambassador to the U.S., Miguel Angel Salaverria, told him earlier that the death threats against Lopez were "insignificant" and that "some people claim to have received death threats to make themselves seem important."
(CNS 10/30; CUANES 10/29-30; ESOL 10/7)

REBELS STRIKE CAPITAL, GUAZAPA BOMBARDED

Urban commandos of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) riding in a pick-up truck machine-gunned a First Infantry Brigade patrol near brigade headquarters in the capital on the morning of October 31, killing one soldier and wounding another, according to army sources and local news reports.

In a phone call to a radio station, a representative of the FMLN's Modesto Ramirez Central Front called the rebel action "a response to military operations in our zones" and said the FMLN "reserves the right to carry out military actions in the rearguard of the enemy."

Early the previous morning, according to the Armed Forces Press Committee (COPREFA), army units launched a major assault on rebel-held territory on Guazapa Volcano, north of San Salvador. The military action included heavy aerial and artillery bombardment that was audible in the capital.

Rebels said they inflicted 22 casual-

ties on the army, killing eight, and lost one dead themselves in the October 30 fighting on the volcano, while First Infantry Brigade commander Colonel Francisco Elena Fuentes reported six soldiers wounded and two insurgents killed.

Local news said some 200 rebels attacked advance units of the First Infantry Brigade in the Guazapa area on October 29, with no report on casualties.

Elsewhere in the country, local news said insurgents sabotaged a warehouse on a coffee farm owned by Margarita Llach de Cristiani, wife of President Alfredo Cristiani, just outside Santiago Maria, Usulután province on October 31.

Two primary power lines were also reported sabotaged in Usulután and Cuscatlán provinces on October 31.

The day before, the elite Atlacatl Battalion suffered eight casualties in combat near San Jose Las Flores, Chalatenango province, according to rebel Radio Venceremos, while government troops said they destroyed a rebel encampment in Cabanas province.

The FMLN said three government soldiers were killed or wounded on October 28 in fighting on the outskirts of Jocoaticque, in Morazan province.

On October 27, according to rebel sources, four soldiers were killed in an ambush in Cabanas, and two members of the National Guard were killed and four wounded outside Tecoluca, San Vicente province.

The FMLN said one insurgent also died in the clash near Tecoluca.

COPREFA also reported two dead in the ranks of the National Guard during the Tecoluca battle and said two rebels died. The army press service added that six insurgents were wounded in fighting in the provinces of Usulután and Santa Ana and five more wounded in Chalatenango province October 26-27.

Representatives of the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL), meanwhile, on October 31 identified a rebel killed the day before as Venezuelan Julio Guzman, and were also present that day for the exhumation of the body of FMLN member "Veronica," killed September 11 under circumstances to be determined.

(SP 10/27-29, 10/31, 11/1; AFP 10/31; AP 10/30; ER 10/31)

\$100 MILLION IN COCAINE SEIZED IN ACAJUTLA

Salvadoran National Police seized over 6,000 pounds of cocaine, worth an estimated \$100 million in street value, on October 26 in the port of Acajutla.

Six people, including the son of an official of the French Consulate in El Salvador, were arrested and charged with trafficking in narcotics. Three vehicles, \$212 in cash, and an Uzi machine-gun were also seized.

The cocaine was off-loaded on October 25 from a ship called the "Buque Cordova," of Liberian registry and belonging to the Mexican company, Maternas S.A. de C.V. The cocaine was found in 154 boxes wrapped in 1,232 green plastic bags in a container labeled "Corn Grinders." The shipper was a Salvadoran company known as Aeromar.

Arrested were Michel Salvador Thophile Laennec, owner-operator of Aeromar and son of Phillipe Laennec, an official of the French consulate; Miguel Angel Efren Torres Carballo, Vice-President of Aeromar; Oscar Abel Rosa Lobato and Hector Serrano Arrianza, employees of Aeromar; Luis Fortunato Flores Sepulveda; and Ascencion Aguilar Vasquez. Flores Sepulveda, an alleged member of the Medellin Cartel, was apprehended at Comalapa airport, apparently as he attempted to flee the country.

Laennec is a French national. Flores Sepulveda is a native-born Chilean and a naturalized Salvadoran citizen. The other four are Salvadoran nationals.

It is unclear how Salvadoran police first found out about the cocaine-filled container. According to one story, on October 25, Mexican authorities found 3.17 tons of cocaine when they searched the "Cordova" after it had berthed in Manzanillo, Mexico. When the captain of the ship informed Mexican narcotics police that he had picked up two similar shipments in Buenaventura, Colombia, and off-loaded one in Acajutla, El Salvador, Salvadoran police were quickly notified.

According to the Mexican Maritime

Transportation Company, the owner of the Cordova, company agents reported their suspicions about the cocaine shipment to Salvadoran police on the October 25 and faxed a notice to Aeromar.

Laennec's lawyer said Laennec had volunteered the information to police, and is innocent of all charges against him. A detective from the National Police, Rene Mauricio Vargas, disagreed, saying that the Aeromar suspects were "trying to give the impression that they informed but we think they are creating an alibi to avoid prison." Vargas said Aeromar employees had provided information, but only after the cocaine had been discovered.

(SP 10/29; AFP 10/26, 10/29; ER 10/31)

CENTRAL AMERICAN PARLIAMENT CONVENES

The presidents of El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Panama, and the prime minister of Belize were present as the first session of the Central American Parliament, mandated by the 1987 Esquipulas II accords, officially opened in Guatemala City on October 28.

Also present at the session were more than 60 parliamentary delegates from Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras, and observers from Costa Rica and Nicaragua.

In elections to the Parliament's board of directors earlier in the day, delegates made Christian Democrat and former Guatemalan vice-president Roberto Carpio Nicolle president of the body, and chose as vice-presidents former Honduran president Jose Azcona and El Salvador's Jose Francisco Guerrero, a deputy from the Nationalist Republican Alliance (ARENA) party who has served as presidential secretary to Alfredo Cristiani.

In an address to the official opening session, Carpio Nicolle called the body an "innovation," saying it would function as "the political forum that will broach the political, economic, social, and cultural issues of the region."

In another speech, Guatemalan President Jorge Serrano said "We hope that one day, there will be seven of us," referring to the fact that only three regional countries were fully represented in the opening parliamentary session.

Costa Rica has not ratified the 1987 agreement to create the parliament, but sent two government members to observe its opening. Nicaragua, which has okayed the treaty, has yet to elect delegates to the body and was represented instead by former vice-president Sergio Ramirez.

Neither Panama nor Belize were party to the Esquipulas II accords, but both are seeking to join the regional forum.

The parliament represents ongoing attempts at economic and political integration in the region, where a federated Central America encompassing the present-day states of Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua and Costa Rica existed for nearly two decades following independence from Spain in 1821. (AFP 10/26-27; AP 10/28; FBIS 10/30; RS 10/28; WC-CAS Report)

Sources: Salpress (SP), Agence France-Press (AFP), Associated Press (AP), Catholic News Service (CNS), Inter Press Service (IPS), Reuters (RS), Washington Post (WP); Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS), El Rescate (ER); Christian Urgent Action Network on El Salvador (CUANES); El Salvador On Line (ESOL).

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