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From Associated Press reports

Guerillas claim army troops routed

SAN SALVADOR, El Salvador

El Salvador's leftist guerrillas claimed Tuesday that 200 government troops were killed or injured during the past week's heavy fighting.

The broadcast by the clandestine Radio Venceremos also said, "The army finds itself in a complete rout."

It did not give separate figures for deaths or injuries.

It also did not specify whether all the casualties claimed for the week ending Sunday took place on the Guazapa volcano, a guerrilla stronghold 16 miles north of the capital where the

army launched a major offensive with between 2,000 and 3,000 troops eight days ago.

In the capital, firefights could be heard Tuesday in several outlying areas including Mejicanos, Soyapango and Santo Tomas. There were no official reports on casualties.

The nation's defense minister, Gen. Jose Guillermo Garcia, claimed Monday that troops were making headway in the Guazapa fighting and had killed 122 guerrillas. He said nine soldiers were killed and 23 wounded.

Both sides in the struggle between leftist guerrillas and the U.S.-supported, civilian-military junta often issue conflicting claims that can not be verified independently because of the inaccessibility of combat areas.

Local papers Tuesday published the names of 18 soldiers killed in recent fighting against the guerrillas.

A Defense Ministry source, meanwhile, claimed that a guerrilla clandestine cemetery with "many bodies" was discovered on Guazapa, which is 4,700 feet high, in a cave at a site known as Palo Grande.

The source, who asked not to be named, said the bodies apparently were those of guerrillas killed in combat and carried away by their fellow insurgents.

Authorities frequently claim in reports on clashes that the number of guerrillas killed is not known because the bodies are

removed from the scene of combat.

Social Security announces plan

WASHINGTON

The Social Security Administration, warning that its computer system is on the brink of "a disaster of epic proportions," unveiled a five-year, half-billion dollar rescue plan Tuesday.

Social Security Commissioner John Svahn said, "It's almost a miracle that they're able to get 36 million checks out every single month."

"We can't afford not to do it," he told a news conference.

Social Security makes up to \$1.2 billion in overpayments annually in part because of a three-year backlog in keeping track of how much its beneficiaries earn, he said.

The price tag for the modernization plan is \$479 million over the five years, or about \$173 million more than it already has budgeted for, Svahn said.

The full cost of operating and modernizing its computers and telecommunications system over the next five years is \$2.1 billion.

Svahn said a modern data processing system "literally would save billions."

Social Security's computer system has been a frequent butt of criticism by Congress and the General Accounting Office, which has issued 32 critical reports in the past eight years.

Svahn, who has held his post for less than a year, accused his predecessors of ducking the problems and allowing the steady deterioration of a system that 20 years ago "was a model for the nation."

Svahn said the computer overhaul will eliminate "rampant" opportunities for fraud and abuse. If the agency eliminates overpayments of 1 percent, it will save \$8.5 billion over five years, he said.

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