Peace is rebels' top priority Salvadoran speaker contends

By Paul Ertelt Of the Emerald

Pres. Ronald Reagan's policy of pursuing a military solution in El Salvador may thwart efforts for a negotiated settlement to the five-year-old civil war, a representative of the Salvadoran rebels said Thursday.

Felix Kury, of the Democratic Revolutionary Front (FDR), talked about the possibility of peace in the region, in the EMU

the talks were "the first concrete steps in the right direction," Kury said, adding that the country is a long way from peace.

Duarte, who took office June 1, is not in control of the country's military, Kury said, and there is a danger of a right-wing coup that would end the possibility of a negotiated settlement.

"We have had many coups

d'etat in our history," he said. "This could also be a prelude for U.S. intervention in the area with the excuse of bringing Duarte back into power."

Kury defended the 29 demands the rebels released at Monday's meeting.

"We're asking for \$4.80 per day for the workers who work in the coffee plantations," he said. "I don't think that's so much to ask."

Workers now receive about \$3 per day, he said. Other demands include lower consumer prices, the right of workers to strike, revival of agrarian reform and the withdrawal of U.S. military advisers. Peace is the most im-

portant demand of the. Salvadoran people,

Kury said, but that must be "peace with liberty, peace with dignity and peace with freedom.'

Kury also said that Reagan can take no credit for bringing about the negotiations. Instead, credit should go to the Salvadoran people, he said.

When asked about his opinion of the upcoming U.S. presidential elections, he said he was not here to "interfere" in this country's politics.

"But probably a Democratic administration would be more favorable to negotiations than a Republican administration," he said.

Kury said the rebels have "won the hearts and minds of the Salvadoran people," and have built schools and hospitals in areas they control "with no help from the outside."

"The other side has received millions of dollars and does not have a single hospital, does not have a single school, to show for the aid," he said.

Kury said he is hopeful about peace prospects despite his reservations.

"I don't think we will achieve peace in the next few weeks, but at least both sides are talking.'



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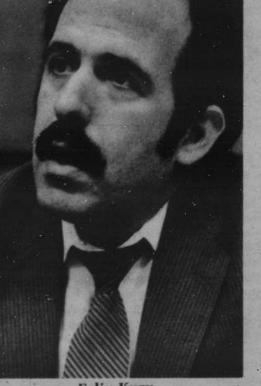
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Felix Kury

Forum Room. The FDR, the rebels political wing, is allied with the Farabundo Marti Front for National Liberation (FMLN), the guerrilla force which is fighting the U.S.-backed Salvadoran army.

The rebels met Monday with Salvadoran Pres. Jose Napoleon Duarte to talk about ways of ending the war that has taken an estimated 50,000 lives. Though





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