LATIN AMERICA

Kidnapping Tests Mexican Policy

The kidnapping by leftist guerrillas of a well-known Mexican senator will test the government's policy of not giving in to kidnappers' demands.

Interior Minister Moya announced Monday that the senator and four associates had been abducted on May 30 by Lacio Cabanas' guerrilla group, the country's chief rural terrorist band. Cabanas operates in Guerrero, a state south of Mexico City, where he receives considerable support from the peasants.

Adding to the government's concern is the fact that the senator is the administration's choice for governor in elections scheduled for later this year in Guerrero. He had promised in his campaign to "pacify" the state, and had apparently journeyed to the rugged mountains near Acapulco to meet with Cabanas and offer him "total amnesty."

Thus for the kidnappers' only clear demand for the release of the victims is the removal of army troops and police from areas where Cabanas operates. Press reports last night indicated that local police have been withdrawn from the areas.

Secretary Moya says the federal government will make no decision on how it will react until it is certain that the victims are alive and Cabanas' demands are made more precise. Cabanas has been known to execute victims when ransom demands were not met.