

9-12-2002

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### Recommended Citation

LADB Staff. "San Salvador Mayor Seeks Third Term." (2002). <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/noticen/9005>

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## San Salvador Mayor Seeks Third Term

by LADB Staff

Category/Department: El Salvador

Published: 2002-09-12

Hector Silva, twice Farabundo Marti para la Liberacion Nacional (FMLN) mayor of San Salvador, has decided to run for another term, but this time he insisted on running as a coalition candidate. Putting a pluralist face on his candidacy meant that the FMLN would have to support candidates of the coalition parties in other municipalities. A coalition might have allowed a renewed relationship with the Movimiento Renovador (MR), a party recently formed after a schism within the FMLN (see NotiCen, 2002-04-18), but the wounds inflicted proved too deep and as yet unhealed.

Facundo Guardado, president of the MR, favored the plan. "This is a proposal to achieve governability," he commented, referring to the fundamentals of urban governance garbage collection, public transport, sewers. But others were less enthusiastic. Accion Popular (AP) general secretary said that the problems of Greater San Salvador "cannot be seen in isolation." But the MR had problems within the FMLN.

"Integration is not going along with whatever," said deputy Humberto Centeno, who sees accommodation with the MR as damaging to his party in view of the bitter struggles that spun them off from the FMLN (see NotiCen, 2002-02-21). For Jorge Villacorta of the Centro Democratico Unido (CDU), exclusion of the MR would result in an incomplete integration. "Either you do it among all, or it doesn't make sense," he said. Silva, however, was adamant.

He told the press early on, "I'm absolutely decided that if I'm going to run again for the municipality of San Salvador, it must be in coalition. Otherwise it doesn't make sense to take on the responsibility of running." But the MR hope for inclusion was not to be. The FMLN, still smarting from the bitter dispute that resulted in the far-left faction's breaking off from the party, closed that door permanently. The MR was excluded from consideration.

Instead, the Renovadores entered into a competing coalition with the Partido Democracia Cristiana (PDC) and the Partido Social Demócrata (PSD). This opposition was, however, tentative. PSD and PDC leaders issued a statement saying, "If the FMLN lifts the veto imposed on the Renovadores, the three parties have no problem backing the candidacy of Hector Silva." Silva clarified the issue: "The FMLN will not participate in any coalition of parties that includes the Renovadores. Period."

After a month of negotiation, Silva's coalition consisted of the FMLN, AP, CDU, and Iniciativa Ciudadana. The agreement reached by the participants calls for a division of power in which the AP and CDU have the most to gain. The FMLN governs 11 of the 14 municipalities of the metropolitan zone of San Salvador. Neither smaller party has ever competed directly in elections before. In the agreed scheme, each party postulates candidates under its own banner, but where one party puts forward a candidate, the others do not compete and are obligated to support the coalition candidate in that municipality.

For Silva, while his party will not hold the same nominal power, the coalition means "a new way to govern, where the important decisions are not subject to the election process of one party." The municipal elections are slated for March 2003.

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