

9-2-1988

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Recommended Citation

Tyroler, Deborah. "Interview: Rafael Moran Castaneda, Leader Of Salvadoran National Conciliation Party." (1988).
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Interview: Rafael Moran Castaneda, Leader Of Salvadoran National Conciliation Party

by Deborah Tyroler

Category/Department: General

Published: Friday, September 2, 1988

Rafael Moran Castaneda is a leading member of the National Conciliation Party (PCN), traditionally the party of the military. Since 1984, the party has been a loyal ally of the Christian Democratic Party. While PCN has managed to maintain a semblance of party unity, a PCN deputy elected in March was bought by ARENA (Nationalist Republican Alliance) in order to ensure the latter's majority in the Legislative Assembly. Summarized below are excerpts from an interview with Moran, conducted in April, and published in the June issue of *Pensamiento Proprio*. [*Pensamiento Proprio* is a publication of the Regional Coordination for Economic and Social Research of Central America and the Caribbean-CRIES, Managua.] PP: To what do you attribute the Christian Democrats' losses in the March elections? Moran: The election results show that the Salvadoran people are thinking of only two things: the resolution of the war and of the economic crisis. The DC failed because it had no solution for either. The people voted for ARENA because in its electoral campaign it knew how to put forward the idea that the war is a business for some and it has not been won because they had interests in seeing it continue. It was a muffled, but audible, message. PP: Is there a political vacuum in El Salvador? Moran: Yes, there is. The resolution of the economic crisis is very far away, and peace even farther. What happened in the Legislative Assembly following the elections showed there is no desire among the parties to solve even the crisis of legislative power. PP: With whom will the PCN make alliances? Moran: At the moment, we cannot join forces with the Democratic Convergence: they are far removed from the Salvadoran reality. Some of their leaders have been out of the country for too long and have lost touch with the situation. Perhaps in the future they will put forward more realistic proposals, and if these fit in with our ideology, we can support them. We are taking a new look at our alliances. If the DC recognizes and corrects its errors, we would be delighted. If ARENA sponsors decentralized development projects, then we will back them. We are not narrow-minded. PP: What do you think of all the talk about a consensus among political forces? Moran: Everyone speaks of consensus, yet each party wants it to be around its own program. Talk of consensus is utopian. PP: Does the PCN continue as the party of the military? Moran: Since 1971 when we broke our ties with the Armed Forces, we have stayed on the democratic path. The military connection did us a lot of damage on the international level. We continue to have friends among the leadership of the Armed Forces, such as General Blandon, Colonel Ponce, etc., to whom we have put forward our program. This is not to say that they should help us that would be a return to the past but in the event that we win, they would look on it favorably. PP: What do you fear most of ARENA and the FMLN as your political opposition? Moran: ARENA has no social vision. They believe that by solving the economic problem they can solve everything, but this is not so. In 1978, El Salvador received incredible revenues but the wealth was not distributed, and tensions became more acute. If ARENA imposes their neo-capitalist model, the people will turn to the FMLN. The FMLN does not have enough force to take power. They try to win through attacks and sabotage, but they cannot. However, the FMLN is not weak or they would have already been defeated. PP: How can the war be ended? Moran: Our answer is negotiations. Without negotiations the war will not end. ARENA speaks of winning but I do not see how. Following the

results of the last elections which gave them a majority, violence and murders have increased. One of the most delicate points in our country is protection of human rights. The military and police are full of common criminals, and the administration of justice is insufficient. The solution is to search for a political way out of all this, a way out with which all sides are in agreement.

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