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## Interview: Fmln-fdr Spokesperson Martinez On Impact Of Salvadoran Elections

by Deborah Tyroler

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Commander Ana Guadalupe Martinez is a member of the political-diplomatic commission of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front-Revolutionary Democratic Front (FMLN-FDR). Reproduced below are excerpts from a recent interview appearing in the April 1989 issue of *Pensamiento Propio*, a publication of the Regional Coordination for Economic and Social Research of Central America and the Caribbean-CRIES, Managua.] PP: The FMLN transport strike objectively helped [ARENA candidate Alfredo] Cristiani win the presidential election in the first round. Wouldn't it have been better had he made a weaker showing by being obligated to participate in a runoff? Martinez: It was fundamental for the FMLN that the Christian Democratic Party not return to power. That would have meant five more years of war against an enemy that not everybody clearly identifies, in spite of the fact that it was this enemy [the Christian Democrats] who legitimized the policy of mass murder and war. We did not specifically set out to help Cristiani win in the first round. But faced with the danger of a Christian Democrat victory in the second round by rigging the election or because of US pressure to vote for what is mistakenly called the "lesser evil" I think we ended up with a result that is clear to everyone. In addition, it is not true that ARENA will be strong. [Christian Democrat President Jose Napoleon] Duarte had much better conditions to build a social base and he did not succeed. Cristiani is taking charge of a country much more convulsed by war and social unrest, and with an army divided by two different military doctrines the low intensity war of the young officers and the total war of the friends of the murderer [Roberto] D'Aubuisson, ARENA's real leader. Cristiani, faced with the question of continued US aid (although it seems they want to "give him a chance"), will wear down much more rapidly. We have undertaken the task of removing the mask from the oligarchy, and this will be much easier now than with Duarte. We can even put forward the idea of an anti-ARENA bloc with the participation of sectors from the Christian Democratic rank and file. Beretta: And the negotiations [between the FMLN and the government]? Martinez: Chances are remote in the short term. But when we show Cristiani that the country cannot be governed which won't take long, the possibilities of establishing effective negotiations...will be better with ARENA than with Duarte. Duarte became a mediator between us and the United States. In this respect, Washington is wrong to think that the FMLN prefers ARENA because it would help us launch an insurrection. We will continue to seek political solutions in order to avoid greater costs to a country already bled dry and divided. But if ARENA applies a two-way policy of dialogue and war, we would not have any other alternative [than to continue fighting]. Beretta: The transport strike and the call to abstain from voting affected your ally, the Democratic Convergence. You were not able to avoid this contradiction? Martinez: After receiving the regime's negative response to our electoral proposal, the FMLN had no reason to let these elections go ahead. However, the Convergence could not withdraw from the race because they would have lost a good part of the political benefits gained by the return of Guillermo Ungo and Ruben Zamora to the country. Perhaps we both underestimated the real impact our electoral proposal had among the people and the frustration generated by its rejection. In any case, although it cost the Convergence, in the long run the process strengthened the common strategy of a political

solution to the conflict, toward which the alliance will intensify its efforts. Abstentions, spoiled ballots, and votes for the Convergence while modest under the circumstances because of the fraud that occurred made up a united bloc for peace. And in spite of all, the Convergence was able to consolidate a small but organized force of its own after eight years in exile.

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