4-21-1989

Interview: Salvadoran Democratic Convergence Leader Ruben Zamora On Election Results, Political Future

Deborah Tyroler

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/noticen

Recommended Citation
Interview: Salvadoran Democratic Convergence Leader
Ruben Zamora On Election Results, Political Future

by Deborah Tyroler
Category/Department: General
Published: Friday, April 21, 1989

[Ruben Zamora is a leader of the center-leftist coalition known as the Democratic Convergence. Reproduced below are excerpts from an interview focused on the March 19 elections and future prospects, with Gianni Beretta for Pensamiento Proprio. The interview was published in PP's April 1989 issue. Pensamiento Proprio is a publication of the Regional Coordination for Economic and Social Research of Central America and the Caribbean-CRIES, Managua.] Beretta: In hindsight, do you think it was wise to participate in the elections? Zamora: Overall, our participation was positive although we knew from the outset that we were dealing with elections in the midst of war, and that the elections were not going to resolve the conflict. We achieved to our satisfaction the objectives of extending the organization of each party in the Convergence, carrying out a political education campaign around this goal, overcoming some of the fear people have about taking to the streets. We did not obtain the electoral result we had hoped for because of our weakness outside the cities and the rigging of the election so that we would not come in third place which would have given us representation on the Central Electoral Council. The FMLN's transport strike affected us, too. We lacked the resources to provide enough vehicles even for our poll watchers. Beretta: Could this have been avoided? Zamora: We tried to convince the FMLN to lift the ban on transport one day before the elections. But after the rejection of their electoral offer [by the government], the guerrillas feared that by stepping back they would give the impression of legitimizing the elections in some way. It cost votes for the Convergence and confusion among the coalition's ranks. But the alliance still advocates its strategic proposal to initiate serious negotiations that would put an end to the war. Beretta: Do you think the FMLN's actions helped ARENA win in the first round? Zamora: They helped, but the determining factor was the Christian Democrat Party with its corrupt government, internal divisions, and terrible electoral campaign aimed at winning over rightist sectors. Beretta: What do you think will happen now? Zamora: First of all, we are worried about what could happen during the virtual power vacuum that will last until June 1. Afterwards, we think that [ARENA President-elect Alfredo] Cristiani will need to adopt a moderate attitude, at least until US Congress guarantees aid to El Salvador in September. But sooner or later serious contradictions will arise within ARENA that will inevitably have repercussions in Washington. The polarization will increase. The possibility of serious negotiations is temporarily removed until the government falls into crisis again. It is a difficult situation, but it must not be forgotten that many steps have been taken especially by the political parties that "committed the sin" of talking with the FMLN toward a constructive dialogue between the protagonists in the conflict. Beretta: What future do you see for the Christian Democratic Party? Zamora: It has two options. It can return to being the party it was in the 1960s, when it defended popular interests, turned toward the left and called for a national consensus in order to obtain a political solution [to the country's socio-political crisis]. Or, it can wait for the ARENA government to wear down and then declare itself once again to be the "great democratic center alternative," something emphasized by Fidel Chavez Mena in his disastrous electoral campaign. This would be fatal for the party.