

CRS Issue Brief

El Salvador's March-April 1994 Elections: Implications for U.S. Policy

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SUMMARY

El Salvador held important elections on Mar. 20, and Apr. 24, 1994. These were the first elections since the 1992 Peace Accord, and the first elections in recent history in which all political currents participated, including the former guerrillas of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN). Although some applicants did not receive their voting cards, and some registered voters were unable to find their names on the electoral rolls, most international observers, including the United Nations Observer Mission (ONUSAL), characterized the elections as acceptable, despite many problems.

In a phenomenon that occurs every fifteen years, four elections coincided on Mar. 20, 1994: (1) the election of the President (5 year terms), (2) the election of the single chamber Legislative Assembly (3 year terms), the election of mayors and municipal councils (3 year terms), and the election of representatives to the Central American Parliament (5 year terms). Nine parties participated in the election. The parties competed separately in nearly all races, but the leftist parties supported coalition candidates in the presidential race and in some municipal races. The election on Apr. 24, 1994, was a runoff between the top two presidential candidates, since the leader failed to gain over 50% of the vote.

The three major candidates for the presidency were: **Armando Calderon Sol** of the Nationalist Republican Alliance (ARENA), the candidate of the right, representing a continuation of President Cristiani's policies; **Ruben Zamora**, the candidate of the leftist Coalition (Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front -- FMLN, Democratic Convergence -- CD, National Revolutionary Movement --

MNR), arguing for greater attention to social issues; and **Fidel Chavez Mena** of the Christian Democratic Party (PDC), the centrist candidate.

In the first round presidential contest, Calderon Sol of ARENA led strongly with 49.03% of the vote. Zamora of the leftist Coalition trailed with 24.90% of the vote, putting him into the second round runoff. Chavez Mena of the PDC came in third with 16.39%, and other candidates trailed far behind. In the second round, Calderon Sol won convincingly, with 68.18% of the vote, while Zamora gained 31.65%.

In the legislative contests, ARENA won 39 deputies, with 45.03% of the vote; FMLN won 21, with 21.39%, Christian Democrats 18, with 17.87% of the vote, and other parties won 6 deputies. In municipal races, ARENA won 207 of the 262 municipalities, PDC won 29, FMLN 15, and other parties 11.

United States officials have indicated willingness to work cooperatively with the new Calderon Sol government inaugurated on June 1, 1994. Although ARENA will have a working majority in the Legislative Assembly, with support from the National Conciliation Party (PCN), and will control most of the municipalities, Calderon Sol has indicated a willingness to seek policy by consensus to some extent. One question for U.S. policy is the pace for reducing U.S. assistance to El Salvador at a time of significant but somewhat fragile progress.

MOST RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Final returns from El Salvador's presidential runoff race on Apr. 24, 1994, showed Armando Calderon Sol of ARENA winning convincingly, with 68.2% of the vote, while Ruben Zamora of the leftist Coalition trailed with 31.7% of the vote. The conduct of the second round was improved, but many problems remained. Zamora acknowledged defeat and congratulated Calderon Sol, and the two pledged, within the next two years, to undertake a serious reform of the electoral system. Calderon Sol was inaugurated as President on June 1, 1994, and pledged to encourage conciliation and to comply fully with the Peace Accord signed in early 1992.

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

Context for Elections

The elections on Mar. 20, and Apr. 24, 1994, were the first elections since the Peace Accord, signed in January 1992. This agreement ended the long internal conflict in which various Salvadoran governments, with U.S. military and economic assistance, struggled against the guerrillas of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN). Despite a rather impressive number of elections in the 1980s, the 1994 elections were the first elections in recent history in which all political currents, including the former guerrillas, participated. Since the Peace Accords sought to establish the basis for a democratic and just society, the elections were the culmination of the peace process and a test of the effectiveness of the transformations of Salvadoran society in recent years. To some extent, the elections also were a test of the effectiveness of many years of U.S. assistance to the country, during which the United States urged progress toward democracy, human rights, and economic development.

The 1994 elections were influenced by the country's experience with elections in the past, which in many ways form the benchmarks in El Salvador's recent history. In general, this experience reflects incremental movement since the 1930s away from military control. The experience also reflects a broadening of participation in the elections as more and more sectors were incorporated into the political process.

Era of Military Control, 1931-1979

In the 1930s and 1940s the country was ruled by the military dictator General Maximiliano Hernandez Martinez. In the following decades, military candidates were regularly elected as presidents under the banner of the official party (the Revolutionary Party of Democratic Unification -- PRUD in the 1950s, and the National Conciliation Party -- PCN in the 1960s and 1970s). Particularly in the 1960s Salvadoran military sectors appeared to favor evolutionary economic and social reform of the type espoused by the Alliance for Progress, although they avoided agrarian reform. With relatively open elections in the late 1960s, the opposition Christian Democratic Party (PDC) won the mayoralty of San Salvador, dramatically increased the number of deputies in the Legislative Assembly, and prepared to capture the presidency in the 1972 elections in alliance with leftist forces. Faced with the prospect of defeat, the military in 1972 and again in 1977 resorted to electoral manipulation and fraud to retain control of the country.

In this context, mass-based "popular organizations" emerged and the country experienced growing violence from both rightist para-military groups and leftist guerrillas. To meet the challenge of the mounting violence, progressive sectors of the

military overthrew the government of General Carlos Humberto Romero in October 1979, set up a civilian-military junta, and promised meaningful land and banking reforms to contain the revolutionary situation.

Civilian-Military Juntas and interim Magana Government, 1979-1984

While U.S. aid was withdrawn in mid-1979 and again in late 1980 out of concern with human rights conditions in the country, U.S. presidents generally supported a series of non-elected governments from 1979 to 1984 on the grounds that they were pursuing reformist policies, and were preferable to the Marxist guerrillas who were receiving support from the Soviet Union, Cuba, and Nicaragua. Congress often approved less assistance than requested, and it conditioned assistance upon improvement in human rights.

By March of 1980, important civilian supporters of the civilian-military junta, including the social democratic National Revolutionary Movement (MNR) and the left wing of the Christian Democratic Party, had resigned from the junta and denounced "reform with repression." Shortly thereafter these groups joined forces with the popular organizations to create the Democratic Revolutionary Front (FDR) which became aligned politically with the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) guerrillas in the effort to oust the Junta headed after December 1980 by Christian Democrat Jose Napoleon Duarte. The Junta continued the land reform and conducted the 1982 elections for a Constituent Assembly. While the voter turnout was impressive, leftist sectors refused to participate, arguing that human rights conditions were not conducive to fair elections.

After the 1982 elections Alfaro Magana headed the interim "Government of National Unity," which continued the reforms, completed the 1983 Constitution, and oversaw the 1984 elections, with U.S. assistance under the Caribbean Basin Initiative. In the March 1984 elections, centrist Jose Napoleon Duarte of the Christian Democratic Party (PDC) was elected over Roberto D'Aubuisson of the conservative National Republican Alliance (ARENA) in two rounds with impressive turnouts, but leftist sectors refused to participate.

Presidencies of Duarte and Cristiani, 1984-1994

President Duarte (1984-89) was popular at first when he reduced human rights abuse and sought to negotiate a settlement with the guerrillas. As a result, the Christian Democrats won a majority of seats in the 1985 legislative elections. Despite large scale U.S. assistance following the recommendations of the National Bipartisan "Kissinger" Commission on Central America, the economy worsened, the guerrilla conflict persisted, charges of corruption mounted, Duarte became ill, and the PDC split apart. Christian Democrats lost control of the Legislative Assembly in the 1988 legislative elections, and lost the presidency in the 1989 presidential elections, with Alfredo Cristiani, representing the moderate wing of ARENA, winning the election in the first round. Some leftist forces participated in the 1989 election.

President Cristiani (1989-1994) came to power committed to improving the economy and to negotiating a settlement of the guerrilla conflict. At first he confronted an escalation of the military conflict and a deterioration in human rights conditions, symbolized by the guerrilla's military offensive and the killing of six Jesuit priests by the military in November 1989. Conditions improved in 1990 and 1991 as the government and the guerrillas engaged in U.N.-mediated negotiations, encouraged by

U.S. congressional action that limited American assistance to El Salvador and conditioned restoration or reduction of assistance on guerrilla and government efforts to achieve a negotiated settlement. Meeting generally on a monthly basis, the two sides struggled with some issues, particularly those dealing with the military, but reached agreements on human rights in June 1990, on electoral reform in September 1990, and on constitutional reforms in April 1991. In legislative and municipal elections in March 1991, in which some leftist forces (CD, UDN) participated, ARENA lost its majority and centrist and leftist opposition parties increased representation. In continuing negotiations, the two sides reached a comprehensive Peace Accord in December 1991, which was signed in January 1992.

The Peace Accord, supervised by the United Nations Observer Group in El Salvador (ONUSAL) and overseen by the National Commission for the Consolidation of Peace (COPAZ) representing Salvadoran political parties, called for a 9-month cease-fire, the complete demobilization of guerrillas and their transformation into a political party. It also called for the reduction of the military by half and the elimination of the counter-insurgency battalions, the removal from the military of the security forces and its intelligence functions and the creation of a civilian police force, the screening of the military officer corp by an Ad Hoc Commission of well respected Salvadoran citizens, investigation of the most serious human rights abuses by a U.N. appointed Truth Commission, and creation of a tripartite government-labor-business forum on socio-economic policies, along with other major reforms. Despite delays and postponements, the cease-fire ended with peace in December 1992, and both sides grudgingly complied after setbacks: the FMLN turned over additional weapons following the explosion of an unreported FMLN arms cache in Managua in May 1993, and the government retired in July 1993 the top military officers mentioned in the Ad Hoc and Truth Commission reports.

While some commitments in the Peace Accord remain to be met, including the deployment of the National Civilian Police (PNC) in all areas, and the transfer of land to ex-combatants, the process has been reasonably successful. The murder of two FMLN leaders in October and November 1993, along with the killing of three ARENA members generated concern that death squad activity might be re-emerging. As a result, under U.N. and U.S. pressure, the government created a Working Group of distinguished citizens to investigate such activities.

Election Contests and Procedures

Electoral Contests

In the **first round on Sunday, March 20, 1994**, voters participated in four elections simultaneously and they cast three separate ballots. Voters indicated their preferences by making an X through the symbol of the preferred party.

In the **presidential race (blue ballot)**, voters cast ballots to elect a president and a vice president. This was a direct election in which all votes from throughout the country are added together. If any candidate had received over 50% of the total valid vote, that candidate would have been declared the winner. Since no candidate achieved over the required majority, a run-off was held on Apr. 24, 1994, between the two candidates with the greatest number of votes.

In the **legislative** races (yellow ballot), voters elected deputies from their region to serve in the single chamber Legislative Assembly. In these contests 84 deputies were elected, using the system of proportional representation in multi-member electoral districts: a total of 64 members were elected from local electoral districts within each of the departments, and 20 at large members were elected from a nationwide list. The outcome of these contests roughly coincided with the percentage of the vote that each party obtained (e.g., in a 10-member district, the party with 50% of the vote would win 5 seats, the party with 30% would gain 3 seats, and the party with 10% would gain 1 seat).

The races for 20 seats in the **Central American parliament** were also determined by the outcome of the at-large, national list legislative contests mentioned above.

In the **municipal** races (pink ballot), voters elected mayors and municipal councils in 262 municipalities at the local government level. In these contests, the party obtaining the most votes named the mayor and the members of the municipal council in a winner-take-all system.

In the **second round presidential runoff on Sunday, Apr. 24, 1994**, voters cast one ballot, and chose between the top two candidates, Armando Calderon Sol of ARENA and Ruben Zamora of the leftist Coalition.

Voting Registration and Election Procedures

In order to vote, Salvadorans had to be registered and to have an electoral carnet (identity card with a picture). The registration process was cumbersome and generated some controversy about whether all eligible voters were able to vote. An eligible voter had to first present a national identity card or other proof of identity to an electoral office and to fill out an application (known as a SIRE). The application was then forwarded to the national headquarters of the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE) for verification, and was approved if the person's birth certificate was on record; otherwise, the applicant was rejected until the person presented a copy of the birth certificate or asked the appropriate mayoral office to send a copy to the headquarters. The applicant had to also keep returning to the local electoral office until his approved application arrived and a picture could be taken and attached to form the completed electoral carnet.

Given these difficulties and the long history of civil war in the country, ONUSAL estimated in July 1993 that over 700,000 eligible persons lacked the proper election credentials. After a massive effort to register eligible applicants, all but about 74,000 were accepted. While the 74,000 eligible voters who were rejected for lack of documentation would be a fraction of the 2.4 million citizens inscribed to vote (over 80% of all eligible voters), their votes might make a difference in some municipal contests where contests were decided by a handful of votes, particularly if those not accepted came disproportionately from any political party or tendency.

Voters cast ballots at 6,984 voting tables at 355 polling sites throughout the country in the first round, with representatives of the various parties at each of the tables. Ballots were counted at each of the tables. The certified results were forwarded first to the Municipal Electoral Boards (JEM), then to the Departmental Electoral Boards (JED), and finally to the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE). Results were also faxed, transported, or flown to the TSE headquarters, so that preliminary results could

be announced quickly, sometime after 9:00 p.m. on election night. Once the results were fully scrutinized, the TSE announced the official results. The election was heavily monitored by about 900 observers from ONUSAL as well as up to 3,000 international observers.

Parties Participating in the Election

Nine parties participated in the election. The parties competed separately in nearly all races, but the leftist parties supported a coalition candidate in the presidential race, and a variety of coalition candidates were fielded in a few of the municipal races.

Leftist Parties

Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN). This party, the political outgrowth of the guerrilla movement that fought against various governments from the 1970s to the 1990s when the conflict was settled through the Peace Accord, competed in an election for the first time. As a guerrilla movement the Front was made up of five constituent groups, with different leaders and tendencies; that same feature continues in the political party formation, with some of the groups more favorable than others to broad coalitions with opposition movements, including the decision to support the leftist Coalition candidate for the presidency, Ruben Zamora. The Front has a base of support, particularly in urban areas and former conflict areas, and it can count on the organizational skills of former militants and popular organization leaders. With high name recognition, it was viewed favorably by those that credit it with bringing about numerous positive changes in El Salvador under the Peace Accords, but it was viewed unfavorably by those who blame it for inflicting death and damage upon people and property during the decades of guerrilla war.

Democratic Convergence (CD). Headed by Ruben Zamora, the presidential candidate in 1994 for the leftist Coalition, this was the third election for the CD, although with different components. The CD and the MNR (see just below) were outgrowths of the democratic left sectors that joined the civilian-military juntas in 1979 but then split with the juntas to form the Democratic Revolutionary Front (FDR) that eventually made a political alliance with the FMLN guerrillas against the governments in power. Two of the main leaders of the FDR -- Guillermo Ungo of the MNR, and Ruben Zamora of the MPSC (see just below) -- returned to El Salvador from exile in 1987 and created the Democratic Convergence, a coalition at the time of Ungo's MNR (National Revolutionary Movement), Zamora's MPSC (Popular Social Christian Movement) and the PSD (Social Democratic Party). The CD competed in the 1989 presidential race, with Guillermo Ungo as the presidential candidate and Ruben Zamora as the vice presidential candidate, winning 3.8% of the vote. The CD ran candidates in the 1991 legislative race, winning 12% of the nation-wide vote, and 8 deputy seats in the Legislative Assembly, and Ruben Zamora became the Vice President of the Assembly. The MNR left the CD in 1992, partly over the question of the presidential candidate for the leftist coalition.

National Revolutionary Movement (MNR). Founded in 1965, this social democratic party affiliated with the Socialist International, has long played a role in Salvadoran politics. It joined with the Christian Democrats in the 1970s to form the National Opposition Union that was cheated in elections, it joined in the first civilian-military junta, and it formed part of the Democratic Revolutionary Front (FDR)

politically aligned with the FMLN (see above). The MNR's leader Guillermo Ungo ran as the Democratic Convergence (CD) presidential candidate in 1989, but he died in 1991. The MNR withdrew from the CD in 1992, and named its leader Victor Valle as its presidential candidate. Valle dropped out of the race in late 1993, and the party decided to support the leftist Coalition candidate for the presidency. The party is especially popular among intellectual sectors and it has considerable backing from the international socialist movement, but its electoral appeal is somewhat limited (3 MNR deputies in the current Legislative Assembly).

Centrist or Center-Right Parties

Christian Democratic Party (PDC). Founded in 1960, this party has long been in the center of political activity, with Jose Napoleon Duarte as the leader until his death in 1989. The party was a leader in the center-left National Opposition Union that was cheated in elections in the 1970s. In a decision that split the party and caused a rift with leftist parties, the PDC entered the civilian-military juntas in the early 1980s, and launched major reforms, including a land reform, but it was accused of tolerating massive repression. Later, it became the dominant party when Duarte was elected president in 1984, and when it gained a majority in the Legislative Assembly in the 1985 elections. Duarte was unable to end the conflict with the guerrillas, however, and with mounting economic difficulties and charges of corruption, the party lost control of the legislature in 1988, and lost the presidency in 1989 to the rightist party. Fidel Chavez Mena, the party's presidential candidate in 1989 and again in 1994, has faced splits within the party in both elections.

National Conciliation Party (PCN). Founded in 1961, this party has a long tradition in El Salvador as the "official" party that put forward the military presidents that governed the country from 1962 to the 1979 coup. Despite losing ground to the PDC and ARENA in the 1980s and 1990s, with a nation-wide organization and longstanding visibility, the party has played a role as a balancing force since the 1982 elections, most often siding with the conservative ARENA (see below). The PCN won only 4.1% of the vote in the 1989 presidential election, but it gained 9% of the vote in the 1991 election, and seated 9 deputies in the Legislative Assembly, giving it more representation (but a smaller percentage of the vote) than the Democratic Convergence. After flirtation with several possible standard-bearers, the party selected Roberto Escobar Garcia as its presidential candidate in 1994.

Authentic Christian Movement (MAC). Founded in 1988, the group, under the leadership of Julio "Fito" Rey Prendes, split off from the Christian Democratic Party (PDC) largely over the candidate selection issue, taking with it most of the PDC legislators at the time. Generally taking a more conservative posture, the MAC received about 1% of the vote in the 1989 presidential contest. It won 3.2% of the vote in the 1991 contest and seated one deputy in the Assembly. The party's 1994 presidential candidate was a woman, Rhina Rey Prendes, the wife of the party's founder.

Rightist Parties

Nationalist Republican Alliance (ARENA). Founded in 1981 by ex-Major Roberto D'Aubuisson to counter the perceived drift toward socialism and communism, the party grew steadily until it gained a majority in the Legislative Assembly in the 1988 contest and elected Alfredo Cristiani as president with 54% of the vote in the first round in 1989. D'Aubuisson criticized the land and banking reforms promulgated by

the civilian-military juntas in the early 1980s, sought to reverse the reforms through joint action by conservative parties following the 1982 election, and campaigned forcefully but unsuccessfully against Duarte of the PDC in the 1984 presidential race. Stepping aside to improve the image of ARENA and to undercut allegations of his linkages to death squad activities, D'Aubuisson supported Cristiani as candidate and president in efforts to achieve a settlement of the guerrilla conflict; D'Aubuisson died in 1992. Despite early difficulties, Cristiani worked to improve the economy and the human rights conditions, and, most of all, pressed forward to completion of a negotiated settlement of the guerrilla conflict. ARENA's 1994 presidential candidate was Armando Calderon Sol, serving as the second term mayor of San Salvador after solid victories in 1988 and 1991. ARENA has a truly impressive nation-wide organization, with broad appeal to some rural and lower class sectors as well as to the better off middle sectors. The party won 44.3% of the vote in the 1991 legislative election, a slight drop from its 1988 performance, giving it 39 seats in the Assembly. While it won some support because of its claim to have improved the economy and to have brought peace to the country, as the incumbent party it was blamed for failure to address continuing problems. It might also have been harmed by the fact that the U.N.-appointed Truth Commission found party founder D'Aubuisson to be linked to various death squad activities, including the killing of Archbishop Oscar Romero in 1980.

National Solidarity Movement (MSN). Founded in 1992, this is one of two new evangelical parties that participated in the election for the first time, seeking support from El Salvador's large evangelical community. The MSN's 1994 presidential candidate was Manuel Edgardo Rodriguez Engelhard. While generally considered to be conservative, the party has some populist tendencies as well.

Unity Movement (MU). Founded in 1993, this is the other evangelical party that sought support in its first election. The party's 1994 presidential candidate was Jorge Martinez Menendez, who has served as a Vice-Minister of Agriculture and of Interior in the Cristiani government. This party is generally considered to have a conservative orientation.

Major Candidates for President

There were three major candidates in the presidential contest, and after those three the other candidates' drawing power dropped off substantially. Listed in the order of voter preference, the candidates were Armando Calderon Sol (ARENA), Ruben Zamora (FMLN-CD-MNR Coalition), and Fidel Chavez Mena (PDC).

Armando Calderon Sol (ARENA), the Candidate of the Right

Calderon Sol was the candidate of the National Republican Alliance (ARENA), the party currently in power under President Cristiani. Calderon Sol is the second-term Mayor of San Salvador, the capital and major city by far, after impressive victories in 1988 and 1991 elections. His program called for a continuation of the conservative, free market policies adopted by President Cristiani. His ads emphasized the accomplishments of the ARENA administration, and one of his slogans is "This Must Continue." Calderon Sol is usually characterized as coming from the D'Aubuisson faction of ARENA, and he regularly heaps praise upon the party's founder, and often articulates strongly conservative positions. Others argue that ARENA's national leadership has become more modern and more moderate since D'Aubuisson's death. Calderon Sol appealed for support on the basis of ARENA's role in improving the

economy and in bringing peace to the country, and he counted upon an extremely well organized party apparatus to get out the vote and to monitor the vote counting. He lacked D'Aubuisson's charisma and appeal to peasants in the countryside, and with more competition from the leftist parties in those areas, ARENA might have suffered to some extent. Calderon Sol might also have been hurt by the fact that U.S. documents declassified in December 1993 contained allegations that Calderon Sol's house was used to plot a kidnapping scheme; the same documents linked the current Vice President Merino from ARENA, in death squad activities. ARENA has denounced the allegations, and the U.S. Embassy has admitted that the documents contained unsubstantiated comments from a political source. Since Calderon Sol was leading in the polls, he refused to enter into public debates with his opponents, despite insistent calls for such debates.

Ruben Zamora (FMLN-CD-MNR Coalition), the Candidate of the Left

Zamora was the candidate of the leftist Coalition, which is supported by the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN), the Democratic Convergence (CD), and the National Revolutionary Party (MNR). He has long been associated with leftist politics in El Salvador. He was a former member of the Christian Democratic Party (PDC) in the early 1980s and participated in the early civilian-military juntas following the reformist military coup in October 1979. He left the junta and the party in March 1980 after his brother (Mario Zamora, the Attorney General) was assassinated, arguing that the Christian Democrats should break with the military that was practicing "reform with repression." He subsequently formed the Popular Social Christian Movement (MPSC), one of the moderate left, non-violent groups that made up the Democratic Revolutionary Front (FDR) that opposed the government throughout the 1980s. He went into exile in the early 1980s and was a member of the Political-Diplomatic Commission of the FDR-FMLN through most of the presidency of Jose Napoleon Duarte (1984-89). In 1987 he and other moderate leftists returned to El Salvador, urged a negotiated settlement of the guerrilla conflict, and helped form the Democratic Convergence (CD) coalition of parties that ran in the 1989 presidential election and the 1991 legislative elections. The CD came in fourth in the 1989 election, with 3.8% of the vote, but it won 12% of the vote in the 1991 elections, was the second largest political force in San Salvador, and won 8 seats in the Legislative Assembly. Zamora was subsequently elected Vice Chairman of the Legislative Assembly, and played a major role in the multi-party Inter-Party Commission, and the Commission on Peace (COPAZ) that facilitated the negotiation and implementation of the Peace Accord. Zamora is well known throughout the country. For some he has considerable appeal as a moderate leftist with a significant role in advancing the peace process in the country. For others, he is too closely associated with the guerrillas.

Fidel Chavez Mena (PDC), the Candidate of the Center

Chavez Mena was the presidential candidate of the centrist Christian Democratic Party (PDC). Trained as a lawyer, he has long been associated with Christian Democratic politics. He was El Salvador's foreign minister from 1980-1982 in the civilian-military junta headed by Jose Napoleon Duarte, and he was the planning minister for three years under President Duarte (1984-89) following the democratic elections in March 1984. He was selected as the Christian Democratic presidential candidate for the 1989 election as the successor to Duarte, following a split within the party that led to the creation of the Authentic Christian Movement (MAC) under Rey Prendes. The Christian Democrats were criticized for corruption and for failing to end the guerrilla conflict. They lost badly to the conservative ARENA party in the 1988

legislative elections and the 1989 presidential elections. Alfredo Cristiani of the ARENA party won the 1989 election convincingly in the first round with 53.8% of the vote, while Chavez Mena won only 36.5% of the vote. This year again Chavez Mena's selection for the 1994 election came after a contest within the party that pitted him against Abraham Rodriguez, a founding member of the party who ran for president in 1967 and who favored a broad center-left coalition in which the Christian Democrats would join with the Democratic Convergence and the FMLN against the ARENA party. Despite continuing broad appeal as a moderate, centrist party that deserves credit for reducing human rights abuse and attracting considerable U.S. and foreign assistance, the results suggest that the PDC lost its role as the second force in the country but remains a force as the third largest party.

Results of the Elections

The first round of elections was held on Mar. 20, 1994, under peaceful conditions. All parties, including the former guerrillas, participated and cooperated in the "elections of the century" that represented a culmination of the peace process. While long lines and disorganization were evident in many areas, most international and domestic observers praised the good will of the parties and characterized the elections as free and fair. However, the U.S. Citizens Elections Observer Mission (USCEOM) issued a report in June 1994, that characterized the elections as a step forward, but criticized the Supreme Electoral Tribunal for negligence that disenfranchised a large number of voters, enough to have a significant impact on some municipal races and some impact on legislative contests.

Criticisms focused on the approximately 74,000 persons who applied for an electoral card but did not receive it for lack of proper documentation, on the many persons who had an electoral card but were unable to vote because they could not find their names on the lists at the voting tables, and on the lack of transportation for many voters. One problem that had threatened to be a blot on the elections was resolved at the last minute. This was the decision of the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE) that voters in four municipalities in Chalatenango would vote in the departmental capital rather than at the local sites. This was resolved, under pressure from ONUSAL, when the TSE permitted voters to cast ballots either at the local sites or at the departmental capital. Another criticism centered on the low turnout in the elections, with about 1.4 million voting out of 2.4 million on the electoral lists, although people noted that the list contained the names of people who had died, moved, or left the country.

The announcement of preliminary results for all races in the country went well at first, but there were subsequent difficulties and the final scrutiny leading to official results went very slowly. Looking to the second round, leftist parties called for efforts to assure that all those with electoral carnets be able to vote, and ONUSAL made a number of suggestions, including the decentralization of polling sites, better orientation for voters, public transportation, and more training for electoral boards.

The second round runoff between the top two presidential contenders was held on Apr. 24, 1994, under peaceful conditions, with relevant parties participating in all phases of the process. Most observers noted a number of improvements in the organization of the voting tables and the provision of information to the voters. Moreover, the number of voting sites was increased, and transportation was provided - gratis in rural areas (with international funding), and well coordinated in urban areas. Even so, a large number of voters with electoral carnets were still unable to locate the

correct table where they could vote. None of the difficulties are likely to have affected the outcome in the presidential race, given the large differences between the candidates, but a consensus existed for continuing efforts to reform the electoral system. Ruben Zamora, the candidate of the leftist Coalition, conceded defeat by Sunday evening, and he and president-elect Armando Calderon Sol pledged the next day to undertake a serious reform of the electoral system within the next two years.

Presidential Elections

Results in the First Round. Official results conformed generally to expectations, namely that the rightist ARENA would win a plurality in the contest, but lacking an absolute majority, would be forced into a runoff election against the leftist Coalition. The official results in the first round were as follows:

Armando Calderon Sol (ARENA)	49.03%
Ruben Zamora (FMLN-CD-MNR)	24.90%
Fidel Chavez Mena (PDC)	16.39%
Roberto Escobar Garcia (PCN)	5.39%
Jorge Martinez Menendez (MU)	2.41%
Manuel Edgardo Rodriguez Engelhard (MSN)	1.06%
Rhina Rey Prendes (MAC)	.83%

Results in the Second Round. After some discussion, the parties of the leftist Coalition decided not to concede the election following the first round, despite ARENA's huge advantage. A second round election was scheduled for Apr. 24, 1994 between Calderon Sol of ARENA and Ruben Zamora of the FMLN-CD-MNR Coalition. The official results of the second round were as follows:

Armando Calderon Sol (ARENA)	68.18%
Ruben Zamora (FMLN-CD-MNR)	31.65%

The results show that ARENA was able to maintain, and even improve upon, the 2-to-1 advantage that it had in the first round. This suggests that the leftist Coalition was able to maintain the voters it won in the first round, but it was not that successful in gaining supporters from voters that cast ballots for other candidates in the first round. While many observers believed that PCN voters and supporters of the evangelical parties (MU, MSN) might support ARENA, the results suggest that a fairly large number of PDC supporters decided to support Calderon Sol, rather than to vote for the leftist Coalition. This tendency to support ARENA rather than the Coalition was especially prominent in some of the previous conflictive areas, where the leftist Coalition fared especially poorly. While the PDC remained officially neutral in the race, a number of prominent Christian Democrats, including one of President Duarte's daughters, actively supported ARENA.

Legislative and Municipal Races

The final results in the legislative races suggest that there will be a wide representation of parties in the Legislative Assembly, particularly with a solid representation from the FMLN, which becomes the second major force in the country. As in the past, when the president in power has tended to have a working majority or near majority of the Assembly in recent years -- the PDC after the 1985 elections, ARENA after the 1988 and 1991 elections -- Calderon Sol will have a working majority,

with support from the PCN, although he may need support from other parties in some cases, and he has indicated a willingness to consider the views of all parties.

In the legislative contests, ARENA won 39 deputies, with 45.03% of the vote; the FMLN would have 21 deputies, with 21.39% of the vote; the Christian Democratic Party would have 18 deputies, with 17.87% of the vote; the PCN would have 4 deputies, with 6.21% of the vote; the CD would have 1, with 4.45% of the vote; and the MU would have 1 deputy, with 2.49% of the vote. The minor parties with less than one percent -- MSN (0.95%), MAC (0.90%) and MNR (0.70%) -- would have no delegates in the Legislative Assembly, and may be eliminated for failure to achieve the one percent mark, although the MNR ran in a coalition for the presidency, and the MAC won a municipality.

Final results in the municipal races also suggest that control of municipalities will be diverse, although ARENA would control 207 of the 262 municipalities. The remainder of the municipalities would be divided between the other parties, with the PDC controlling 29, the FMLN 15, the PCN 10, and the MAC 1. The FMLN appears to have done less well than expected in this area, and they challenged the outcome in 37 areas. The TSE dismissed the challenges on grounds that evidence was lacking, or that the challenged votes would not have changed the result of the elections. ARENA challenged the result in Panchimilco, where the votes for municipal officials were at odds with votes for the presidency and the legislature, and after a recount the TSE awarded the municipality to ARENA, rather than the FMLN.

Implications for the United States

The United States has strongly supported free and fair elections in El Salvador, and it has provided guidance and financial assistance to support the 1994 elections. It recognized these elections as a culmination of the peace process and a test of whether differences of governing concepts can be settled through democratic procedures. U.S. officials were satisfied that the elections were relatively fair, and they were heartened by the fact that the results of the election were accepted by all parties. Success in this regard was a great step forward for El Salvador toward the establishment of viable democracy. The official U.S. delegation for the first round, headed by Brian Atwood, Administrator of the Agency for International Development, praised the election and the cooperation displayed by all parties, but called for action to remedy the administrative problems. Mr. Obey of the House Appropriations Committee had placed a hold on assistance to El Salvador to encourage efforts to provide electoral carnets to all eligible voters. A few days before the second round, 74 Representatives sent a letter to President Clinton urging that aid be suspended until Salvadoran officials made necessary changes for the second round. The official delegation for the second round, headed by Mark Schneider, Assistant AID Administrator for Latin American and the Caribbean, congratulated the Salvadoran people for the conduct of the election.

United States officials indicated a willingness to work with whichever candidate won the election, and upon his victory they announced support for president-elect Calderon Sol of ARENA. He is expected to continue the economic policies of Alfredo Cristiani, which the United States has rather enthusiastically supported. Given the results in the Legislative Assembly, however, Calderon Sol would probably find it necessary to pay increasing attention to social issues, and to ameliorate some harmful effects of free market policies, to gain support from the strong leftist and centrist opposition. When he was inaugurated on June 1, 1994, he indicated a willingness to

seek consensus with the opposition parties, and to take steps to fully comply with the Peace Accords.

Given the widely accepted result in the second round of the election, one major question for U.S. policy may be whether the reduction in foreign aid is judicious at a time of significant if somewhat fragile progress in the country. This at a time when almost all political tendencies in El Salvador are arguing that U.S. assistance is important to sustain the national reconstruction effort at this turning point. U.S. assistance to El Salvador has dropped from a high of \$575 million per year in FY1987 to \$304 million in FY1992, to \$228 million in FY1993, and to \$95 million in FY1994. The request for FY1995 is for about \$88.2 million. While there is awareness that the allocation of U.S. aid is responding to major needs in the former Soviet Union and in the Middle East, some argue that it may be unwise to reduce assistance to El Salvador at too rapid a pace. Others argue that the United States has provided millions of dollars in the past, and that El Salvador is showing the capacity to do more on its own, given the many other needs in the world.

FOR ADDITIONAL READING

Americas Watch. El Salvador -- Darkening Horizons: Human Rights on the Eve of the March 1994 Elections, Vol. VI, No. 4, March 1994. 20 p.

Free and Fair?--The Conduct of El Salvador's 1994 Elections: A Report by the U.S. Citizens Elections Observer Mission, June 1994. 24 p.

Hemisphere Initiatives. El Salvador Elections 1994: Toward a Level Playing Field? -- A Report on the Post-War Salvadoran Electoral Process, by Jack Spence and George Vickers, January 1994. 30 p.

U.S. Library of Congress. Congressional Research Service. El Salvador under Cristiani: U.S. Foreign Assistance Decisions, by K. Larry Storrs. Updated regularly. CRS Issue Brief 92034.