

El Salvador's electorate rebels

by Gretchen Small

Voters in El Salvador's March 20 national elections delivered an overwhelming ultimatum to their government: They want a government that will *defeat* the Moscow-allied terrorist insurgency which has waged war against the nation for eight years. The ruling Christian Democratic party was swept out of local office across the country, for having followed U.S. State Department orders that El Salvador's military must fight the terrorists, but can never adopt a strategy to *win*.

There were two big losers in these elections: Moscow's terrorists, and the Rockefeller-Trilateral strategy of endless war in Central America.

The Farabundo Marti Liberation Front terrorists had begun organizing back in January for an election boycott, as a show of support for their war. The boycott was not exactly voluntary. FMLN commandos kidnaped several mayors, shooting one and releasing others, after threatening them not to participate in the elections.

On election eve, the FMLN issued a communiqué calling the elections "another way of legitimizing the warmongering of the state," which gave them "a legitimate right to fight against these elections." Six bombs were detonated in the capital, San Salvador. Electrical powerlines were blown up, leaving 80% of the country in darkness and without running water, for several hours. The terrorists imposed a national transportation "ban" for election day, enforced by a promise to attack any vehicle which used the nation's highways.

Nonetheless, some 70% of El Salvador's voters came out to vote—over half of those, in order to turn the ruling Christian Democrats out of office.

The National Republican Alliance, known as ARENA, campaigned on one theme: the United States and its Christian Democratic puppets lack the will to end the civil war, and are turning the war into a business for corrupt politicians. One of ARENA's leading campaigners was retired Army Col. Sigfredo Ochoa, an outspoken critic of the Duarte government's handling of the war, who charged that the government sends soldiers out to die, but refuses to give them the means to defeat the enemy. Ochoa insisted, "If the United States does not want us to run the war, they should send their own troops, and send a governor to run the country, instead of an ambassador. They have no right to treat us as a colony."

On that basis, ARENA swept the elections. At stake, were municipal posts, and all seats in the 60-member Legis-

lative Assembly. ARENA won mayoral contests in 13 out of 14 provincial capitals, and 200 of the nation's 264 municipalities. Their win in the capital, San Salvador, was a personal defeat for President José Napoleon Duarte. San Salvador had been a bulwark of the Christian Democratic party since 1964, and Duarte's son, Alejandro, was the Christian Democrats' defeated candidate.

Initial results in the Legislative Assembly vote showed ARENA winning between 30 and 33 seats, a large jump from its current 13 delegates. The Christian Democrats dropped from 33 seats, to an estimated 22 delegates.

Will a nationalist movement now develop?

The press in the United States reported to Americans that the election results mean that since the "center" was defeated, fighting between right and left extremes will now escalate. But a *Baltimore Sun* editorial on March 23, was more blunt on what worries Washington. An ARENA-dominated government "could create in El Salvador a situation not unlike what we are now seeing in Panama, where a highly nationalist, militaristic regime is on an anti-U.S. binge," the *Sun* complained.

There is a rebellion under way in Central America, against the Rockefeller crowd which put together the Reagan administration's "Project Democracy" strategy for the region. As recommended in the 1984 Kissinger Commission Report, the U.S. has demanded that national military institutions be weakened (in the case of Panama, eliminated altogether), because they can serve as vehicles for strong nationalism. Mercenaries like the Contras, or subservient politicians, have proven more controllable.

"Napo" Duarte is typical of the Rockefeller stooges this crowd prefers in Central America. If the U.S. flag were the only thing that Duarte had kissed in his career, he would be clean, but Duarte has been a banker's boy since he became the project of Trilateral Commission and Chase Manhattan board member Theodore Hesburgh back in the 1940s. Ever available to do the Rockefellers' dirty work, Duarte was one of the first in the region to join the U.S. State Department's war against Panama's military and commander, General Noriega.

El Salvador's voters have rejected both Rockefeller's banker buddies, and Moscow's guerrillas. The question now posed, is whether the party which benefited from that vote, ARENA, will adopt the kind of nationalist program required to end the war, built upon the economic criteria outlined in Pope John Paul II's encyclicals rejecting the twin evils of Marxist materialism and liberal capitalism.

Until now, ARENA has followed the radical free trade program churned out by the followers of Austrian economist Friedrich von Hayek on behalf of the financial oligarchy. If ARENA attempts to fight a military war, just to defend the local oligarchy and their international masters, the military will soon find itself battling a growing regional terrorist army, recruited from a population driven mad by economic misery.