



Written by [James Murphy](#) on July 2, 2018

Leftist AMLO Wins Mexican Presidential Election in Landslide

Riding a wave of populism and pledging to do away with government corruption, leftist Andrés Manuel López Obrador, commonly known as AMLO, swept to power in landslide fashion in Mexico yesterday. In a four-way race, AMLO received more than 50 percent of the vote, more than thirty percentage points higher than his nearest rival.

“The new project of the nation will try to seek an authentic democracy,” AMLO said, as he spoke in Mexico City’s Zocalo city square just after midnight. “I want to go down in history as a good president of Mexico.”



The 64-year-old former mayor of Mexico City had run for president twice before, narrowly losing to Vicente Fox in 2006 and coming in second in 2012 to Enrique Peña Nieto, the current president. Some critics have charged that AMLO is a leftist strongman in the mold of former Venezuelan leader Hugo Chávez. But AMLO denies any dictatorial urges, saying he was “not looking to construct a dictatorship, either open or hidden.”

The pre-election polls suggested a landslide and they were right. The full vote has not yet been tallied, but official estimates put AMLO at 53.8 percent, with his next-closest rival Ricardo Anaya of the conservative National Action Party (PAN) at 22.8 percent. José Antonio Meade of the current ruling party, the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), received an estimated 16.3 percent, while independent candidate Jaime Rodríguez Calderón received 5.4 percent.

President Trump took to Twitter early on Monday morning to congratulate AMLO: “Congratulations to Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador on becoming the next president of Mexico. I look very much forward to working with him. There is much to be done to benefit both the United States and Mexico!”

AMLO, who had been extremely critical of President Trump in the run-up to his own election, sounded a conciliatory note in last night’s speech. “We will pursue a relationship of friendship and cooperation with the United States, always rooted in mutual respect and in the defense of our fellow Mexicans who live and work honorably in that country,” AMLO said.

It appears that AMLO has long coattails, as his four-year-old National Regeneration Movement Party (MORENA) has snagged 70 percent of the 300 seats currently reporting in the 500-seat Chamber of Deputies. So, AMLO should have a friendly legislature when he takes office December 1.

AMLO and the new legislature have their work cut out for them. Mexico has many issues that need to be addressed and quickly, including:

- Rampant government corruption at federal, state and local levels — the issue that AMLO made the



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centerpiece of his campaign — is the norm in Mexico. And it's not just corruption at the highest levels of government. [In a 2017 poll](#) conducted by the anti-corruption group Transparency International, 51 percent of Mexicans polled said that they had to pay a bribe in order to access public services.

- With more than 25,000 murders in 2017 and 132 murders of political operatives during this election cycle, Mexico is [awash with violence](#). Mexico faces troubles with drug cartels, who are the de facto rulers of many Mexican states. AMLO has stated that he intends to meet daily with his public security cabinet and create a “unified command” in order to deal with these problems. But AMLO has also vowed to use a softer approach in these matters, saying there would be *abrazos, no balazos* (hugs, not shootouts).

- While AMLO has repeatedly said that he will not raise taxes, he has [promised many new social programs](#) for impoverished Mexicans, including doubling pension payments for the elderly. He claims that the money to pay for these programs will come from his war on corruption, which will save untold millions of pesos. But with the endemic corruption in Mexico, this seems like less of a plan and more of a hope.

- Relations with the United States have deteriorated over the past several years due to unchecked emigration into America, which has been encouraged by past Mexican regimes. Mexico has also not taken strong enough action to deter Central American migrants from coming through Mexico to gain entry into the United States. AMLO has ridiculed President Trump repeatedly throughout his campaign and has claimed he will make the American president “see reason” and that he would “put him in his place.” While it might be fun to watch, it's doubtful that AMLO will be able to strongarm Trump into anything.

So AMLO takes over a large ship of state in serious need of a course correction. The Mexican Constitution gives him one six-year term to do so. A friendly legislature and a popular mandate should give him a boost in his efforts, but the people of Mexico will be looking for quick results. AMLO has promised big. Can he deliver, or will his leftist policies drive Mexico further down the drain and closer to becoming a failed state, much like Venezuela under Chávez and now Maduro? The latter seems the most likely.

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