



Written by [Charles Scaliger](#) on March 16, 2009

El Salvador to Lurch Leftward Under Funes

Tiny, tragic El Salvador became on Sunday the latest Latin American country to lurch leftwards, following the lead of the likes of Venezuela, Brazil, Ecuador, and Nicaragua. Popular former TV journalist Mauricio Funes was elected president as the candidate representing the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN).



The FMLN is the Marxist organization that waged a bitter war against the Salvadoran government in the 1980s. Some 75,000 people were killed in the Salvadoran civil war, including several U.S. marines and a U.S. Navy lieutenant commander. Now, the Marxists have accomplished at the ballot-box what 12 years of fighting could not avail them: control of the government of El Salvador.

Nevertheless, Funes, who has so far refrained from the fiery anti-American rhetoric of Venezuela's Chavez or Nicaragua's Ortega, is pledging to strengthen ties with the United States. Although the new Salvadoran government will doubtless employ many former FMLN fighters, the Obama administration is apparently willing to let bygones be bygones. Said State Department spokesman Robert Wood, "We look forward to working with the new government of El Salvador. It was a very free, fair and democratic election."

Funes is also doing his best to allay concerns that the FMLN government will embark on a radical Marxist overhaul of Salvadoran society. "Nothing traumatizing is going to happen here," he said in a television interview. "We will not reverse any privatizations. We will not jeopardize private property. There is no reason at this moment for fear."

We shall see.

Photo: AP Images



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