

Shady Dealings at Brazil's Mayoral Race

Contributed by Guy Burton
Wednesday, 13 October 2004

The main news yesterday in the São Paulo mayoral race was failed mayoral candidate Paulo Maluf (PP) and his son being indicted by the federal police. They are charged with five crimes including money laundering and tax evasion.

The Folha outlines the reasons for the investigation, charting money transfers by Maluf and his family through Swiss bank accounts during the 1980s and his time as mayor of São Paulo (1993-96).

On Monday Maluf met the national executive of the PP to discuss his announcement of support for the second round. However, it was all overshadowed by the police investigation, resulting in him refusing to answer questions to journalists.

Nevertheless, he insisted there was no justification behind the story. Meanwhile the PP's national executive took the further step of not making any statement on the proceedings.

And what of the expected beneficiary of PP support in the second round? You have to wonder whether the PT is laughing or crying at the news.

Maluf being investigated on the eve of his giving his support to Marta Suplicy (PT) would present all the wrong headlines for a party that prides itself on its clean hands.

How else then to explain Marta's statement that "The PP announced its support. The candidate hasn't said it yet – that I know. I have no idea about it [receiving his support]."

Call me cynical, but surely Marta and the PT aren't trying to put clear water between themselves and the man they courted before the first round? I'm sure the left in the party will have something to say about this.

But needless to say there will be some in the party nervously watching the PP. Later on Pedro Correa, the national president of the party, said that Maluf's indictment shouldn't prejudice his eventual support for Marta.

For more information and analysis of the São Paulo and other local Brazilian results, visit the election blog being run by Guy Burton and Andrew Stevens at www.saopaulo2004.blogspot.com.