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NATIONAL ELECTIONS IN PARAGUAY**

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INTRODUCTION

Paraguay's democratic transition began in 1989 with the ouster of Gen. Alfredo Stroessner and the prompt election of Gen. Andres Rodriguez. During the last five years, voters have gone to the polls in record numbers to elect national leaders, municipal officials and members of the constituent assembly. These leaders in turn have created a democratic framework that emphasizes citizen participation and regional input.

The May 9, 1993 national elections marks another important step in the five-year transition to democracy and has created a new pluralism for a new period of consolidation. With results accepted by all parties, the Colorado Party candidate Juan Carlos Wasmosy won the presidency with 40 percent of the vote. Opposition parties won a slight majority in congress.

The pre-election period exemplified the liberalization of the Paraguayan political system. During the campaign, candidates debated issues and parties held rallies throughout the country for thousands of supporters. Journalists covered the campaigns of the major candidates, posing difficult questions about fraud and corruption. Local nongovernmental organizations freely conducted programs on civic education and pollwatcher training. For the first time in nearly 60 years, a third force -- the National Encounter Movement -- challenged the political dominance of the traditional Colorado and Liberal parties.

Freedom of expression and organization during the campaign did not preclude suspicions regarding the administration of the elections, however. Political leaders worried that a close election could provoke government-orchestrated fraud or even military intervention. Pre-election developments contributed to these concerns. When a rival candidate appeared to have won the nomination in the Colorado primaries, the military interceded. A high-ranking military officer promised during the general campaign that the Colorado Party would co-govern with the armed forces regardless who won the elections. Political party leaders complained to international observers that their supporters were being systematically excluded from the voter registry. The Central Electoral Board tightly controlled access to the voter registry compounding fears.

Through a combination of activities before, during and after election day, NDI and the Council international observers obtained a wide perspective on the challenges facing the electoral process. The NDI/Council mission concluded that the overall preparations and administration of the elections were much improved from years past. Supplies, including ballot boxes, ink and voter registries, arrived at the polling stations promptly and in sufficient quantity. Voters generally found their polling stations with little difficulty, putting to rest fears that the registration list had been manipulated to exclude the participation of opposition supporters. Voters cast their ballots in an atmosphere free of intimidation.

The delegation noted with concern, however, attempts to impede citizen participation and disrupt the process. The night before the elections, the army closed the country's borders and prohibited Paraguayans outside the country from voting or participating in the following day's activities. On election morning, unknown assailants bombed a television station owned by a rival of

President Rodriguez. Also, the state-owned telephone company cut SAKA's phone lines, placing in jeopardy the only independent count in the country.

This report assesses the 1993 national elections in Paraguay. The report recognizes the impressive progress made since 1989 and offers suggestions to further increase the transparency and confidence in the election process. It begins with an overview of NDI and the Council's activities in Paraguay. Chapter two presents a brief geographical, economic and historical overview. Chapter three details the electoral framework and voting process while chapter four examines the principal actors in the electoral process. Chapter five reviews the campaign and chapter six reflects on election day proceedings. Finally, chapter seven provides observations and suggestions by the international delegation.

CHAPTER ONE

THE COUNCIL AND NDI ACTIVITIES

A. The Council of Freely Elected Heads of Government

The Council of Freely Elected Heads of Government is an informal group of 21 current and former heads of government from throughout the Americas. The Council was established in November 1986 at a meeting chaired by former U.S. Presidents Jimmy Carter and Gerald Ford on "Reinforcing Democracy in the Americas" at The Carter Center. The Council's goal is to reinforce democracy in the Americas and promote the peaceful resolution of conflict.

The Council has been a pioneer in mediating and observing elections. In addition to Paraguay, the Council has observed elections in Panama (1989), Nicaragua (1990), the Dominican Republic (1990), Haiti (1987, 1990) and Guyana (1992).

B. The National Democratic Institute for International Affairs

The National Democratic Institute (NDI) was founded in 1983 to promote and strengthen democratic institutions around the world. NDI is based in Washington, D.C. and is funded in part by the National Endowment for Democracy. Working with political parties, government leaders, legislatures, civic groups and other institutions, NDI conducts nonpartisan programs to promote, maintain and strengthen democratic institutions in new and emerging democracies.

NDI has conducted democratic development programs in more than 70 countries. Programs focus on six functional areas: election processes, legislative training, local government, civil-military relations, civic education and political party training. NDI involves democratic leaders, experts and activists from around the world as participants, trainers, and advisors in its programs.

NDI Activities in Paraguay

NDI has been involved in Paraguay since 1988. In February of that year, an NDI survey mission visited the country to meet with civic leaders interested in establishing an independent organization that would pressure the dictatorship to liberalize the political system. In a visit to Washington the following month, Aldo Zuccolillo, the publisher of *ABC Color*, reiterated the Paraguayans commitment to such an institute and discussed specific program ideas with NDI staff. Zuccolillo and other prominent leaders created the Center for Democratic Studies (CED) in August 1988. CED's board of directors includes leaders of opposition parties as well as democratic opponents of Stroessner within the ruling Colorado Party.

After the February 2, 1989 coup in Paraguay, NDI sponsored the visit to Paraguay of two Chileans who played leading roles in the plebiscite campaign. With their assistance and a grant from NDI, CED leaders conducted a comprehensive election support program, including a civic education campaign, public opinion survey, pollwatcher training and an independent parallel vote count. A 19-member international delegation led by Senator B.A. Graham of Canada, Christian Democratic Party

President Eduardo Frei of Chile and United States Representative Bruce Morrison complemented the efforts of the CED.

In August 1990, NDI and the CED conducted seminars and panel debates throughout the country to provide a platform for citizens and local leaders to speak about important issues facing the country. In the seminars, participants discussed the importance of municipal governance, the responsibilities of political parties and the role of the military in a democratic society.

The CED followed the seminar with a public opinion survey to assess citizens' understanding of the electoral process and their attitudes toward the democratic process. Interviewers questioned 1,730 people about what they expected from their elected officials, how they registered to vote and the process of voting on election day. The results, broadcast by national television, served as a tool for future civic education projects.

For the May 1991 municipal elections, the CED, with NDI support, trained nearly 12,000 pollwatchers from the major political parties in the country. As with national elections, NDI sent an international observer delegation to monitor the proceedings on election day. Senator Graham, Representative Morrison and Andrés Pastrana, former mayor of Bogotá, Colombia, led the 16-member delegation.

NDI and the CED continued working on municipal issues by conducting a series of workshops for the mayors and city council members elected in the 1991 elections. International participants from Argentina and the United States spoke about the role of municipal governance in their respective countries and the relationship between the local governments and the central government. Paraguayan experts discussed the management of new responsibilities granted to the municipal governments under the 1992 Constitution including property tax assessment and collection. More than 100 local officials from Asunción and the interior attended these seminars held in October 1992 and January 1993.

C. Observing the 1993 Election

Election Observation Methodology

A five-member international delegation visited Paraguay in March to determine how NDI might best lend assistance to the election process. [See Appendix I, "Press coverage from March NDI trip"] While Paraguayans urged an international presence on election day, they also advised NDI to monitor events before and after election day. They warned that the registration list and counting procedure were particularly susceptible to manipulation. Following these suggestions, NDI embarked on a comprehensive monitoring operation, which included a review of the registration list, the deployment of a 32-member international observer delegation on election day and support for an independent vote count.

In April, two Panamanian experts experienced in evaluating the accuracy of registration lists visited Paraguay to analyze complaints made by the opposition and offer suggestions to party leaders.

The experts concurred with the leaders that the list contained irregularities, especially in the assignment of the polling sites. At the suggestion of the experts, the parties mobilized to inform their supporters where to vote.

NDI also sponsored the work of a consortium of local nongovernmental organizations, SAKÃ, to conduct a parallel vote count. This count confirmed the unofficial results that showed Wasmosy the winner of the presidential race. SAKÃ counts in the congressional and gubernatorial races provided a crucial benchmark for the official tallies, released two weeks following election day.

To monitor election day activities, NDI and the Council of Freely-Elected Heads of Government jointly sponsored an international observer delegation led by President Jimmy Carter, who had been invited by the three presidential candidates. [See Appendix II, "Letter of invitation to President Carter"] Most of the 32 member NDI/Council international delegation arrived on the Wednesday before elections and met with key political, military, and election officials. [See Appendix X, "Delegation Schedule"] NDI Staff stationed in the country also provided the delegation with an overview of campaign issues and voting procedures. [See Appendix XI, "Terms of Reference"]

The day before the elections, NDI/Council observers were deployed to six major urban areas throughout Paraguay: Asuncion and surrounding areas, Colonel Oviedo, Ciudad del Este, Encarnación, Concepción and Pedro Juan Caballero. [See Appendix XII, "Election Day Deployment Sites"] The observers met with party candidates, election officials and observers from the Organization of American States (OAS) in the area.

On election day, observers visited 44 voting sites encompassing 1,865 tables, roughly 20 percent of the electorate. The sites and tables were not intended to serve as a representative sample, but the delegates attempted to determine if certain irregularities were apparent throughout the country by visiting as many tables as possible.

At the sites, NDI/Council observers interviewed election officials and pollwatchers at 333 different tables. Observers recorded the answers on an election day checklist. [See Appendix XV, "Election Day Checklist"] The checklist also included questions regarding party representation of pollwatchers and poll workers, the availability of election supplies and the respect of polling procedures. A final question asked those present at the voting table to assess the overall voting process.

Observers also interviewed party site supervisors (apoderados) and recorded answers on the election day checklist. Speaking to the supervisors provided the NDI/Council observers with a sense of the developments at the site without having to visit each table. When problems arose, these supervisors directed observers to specific tables. The interviews with the supervisors were especially important in the large sites with more than 100 tables.

Leadership Meetings on Election Day

On election day morning President Carter and the co-leaders of the NDI/Council delegation met with President Rodriguez and key members of his administration. During this meeting, Carter asked Rodriguez about the deleterious role of army commander Gen. Lino Oviedo in the election process. Rodriguez admitted that Oviedo was at times "overly zealous," but maintained that he was a fine officer who would accept the outcome of the election."

The leadership of the NDI/Council delegation also met with the three main candidates for lunch on election day. The three candidates agreed to: 1) reject future military involvement in the political process; 2) accept the results of the election regardless of the outcome; 3) encourage their supporters to refrain from premature celebration; and 4) cooperate with each other during the transition period. The three candidates and Carter announced these agreements at a press conference immediately following the lunch. [See Appendix XVI, "Press Accounts of NDI/Council Election Observation Delegation"]

During the afternoon, Carter and his delegation visited the municipalities of Luque and Aregua and noted that the polls were being administered without problems. Carter also visited the Central Electoral Board and later inspected the computer center of the SAKÃ quick count, mentioned below.

The SAKÃ organizations had installed six telephone lines two weeks before election day. These lines had functioned without problems until election day. At about ten in the morning, the state-owned telephone company, ANTELCO, changed the phone numbers. President Carter requested assistance from President Rodriguez in restoring the original numbers to the phones. While this was done immediately, the phone service was cut shortly thereafter. Service came and went during the entire day. In the interior, volunteers were not allowed to use public telephone booths. When they were able to use private lines, their calls were immediately intercepted. The NDI/Council delegation issued a statement that it "strongly condemned the actions deliberately taken to restrict the ability of Paraguayans to monitor their own electoral process."

As noted in its delegation statement, NDI/Council observers did not believe the irregularities affected the final outcome of the election. [See Appendix XIII, "NDI/Council Post-Election Statement"] Nevertheless, the delegation believed that some problems on election day -- the bombing of the television station, the closing of the borders and the cutting of the SAKÃ phone lines -- damaged the credibility of the government's commitment to free elections.

CHAPTER TWO GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

A. Geography

Paraguay is a land-locked, semi-tropical country bordered by Bolivia to the north, Brazil to the east and Argentina to the south and west. The country takes its name from the river that divides the fertile grasslands of the east from the drier Chaco region of the west. Slightly smaller than the U.S. state of California, Paraguay has a population of approximately 4.5 million. With a land mass of 157,047 square miles, it is one of the least densely populated countries in the world. Paraguay is divided into 16 departments and 206 municipalities.

The population is 95 percent *mestizo*, mainly of Spanish and Indian origin. The Indian population is comprised of 17 ethnic groups. Indians compose one to three percent of the population and make up the poorest sector of Paraguayan society. Recent immigration has brought settlers from all parts of the world.

The extremely arid Chaco region, which borders Bolivia, encompasses approximately 60 percent of Paraguay's land, but only about 2 percent of the population. The remainder of the population lives east of the Paraguay River.

Paraguay is one of the few bilingual countries in the Western Hemisphere and the only country in the region where an aboriginal language, Guaraní, is spoken more widely than a European one. Most business is conducted in Spanish, but 90 percent of the population speaks Guaraní. The Paraguayan constitution recognizes both as official languages.

Paraguay is a conservative, male-dominated society; women did not gain the right to vote until 1963. About 96 percent of the population is Roman Catholic, although the Church is politically weaker in Paraguay than in most Latin American countries.

The country's land distribution is among the most uneven in Latin America. More than 80 percent of the property is owned by one percent of the population. Cattle-raising, agriculture and forestry form the basis of Paraguay's economy. Cotton, timber, soybeans and vegetable oils are the main exports. Paraguay has almost no known mineral resources, but the country is expected to become one of the world's leading exporters of electricity within the near future, a result of the massive Itaipú Dam constructed jointly by Paraguay and Brazil.

B. Historical Background

1. Early Paraguayan History

Long before 1811, when Paraguay became South America's first independent country, Spanish explorers realized that Paraguay was devoid of gold or silver. Earning a living in Paraguay required attention to the land and a close relationship with the Indian population.

Spaniards established their roots by learning the Guaraní dialect and marrying Guaraní women. In one generation, the *mestizo* children outnumbered their Spanish fathers and formed a new ruling class in Paraguay. By the 1800s, the bilingual *mestizos* outnumbered the Guaraní.

Since achieving independence, Paraguay has been ruled by a series of dictators, beginning with José Gaspar Rodríguez de Francia, who dominated the politics of the country from independence in 1811 until his death in 1840. During Francia's rule, Paraguay was sealed off from the rest of the world, and the country developed little economically and politically. Francia's successor, Carlos Antonio López, opened the country to international trade, but retained the authoritarian style of Francia.

López was succeeded by his son, Francisco Solano López, in 1862. Despite having led the nation into a genocidal war against an alliance of Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay (the Triple Alliance) in 1864, Solano López remains the national hero of Paraguay. By the time he died in battle in 1870, more than 90 percent of Paraguayan males had met a similar fate. Only 28,000 males, many of whom were old men and young boys, survived the war. From the ashes of the Triple Alliance War emerged a new political system consisting of two groups, the Colorados and the Azules, the latter also known as the Liberals.

2. The Early 1900s

Unlike the war against the Triple Alliance, the Chaco War against Bolivia from 1932-1935 restored national pride to Paraguay. Following three years of bloody fighting, the Paraguayans emerged victorious. After the war, the Liberal government was overthrown, and the Febreristas, a reform movement, assumed power.

The Febreristas were overthrown in 1937. From 1937-1954, Paraguay underwent a period of repressive military rule during which all political parties were influenced to some degree by fascism. This period culminated in a civil war in 1947, which plunged the country into chaos. Alfredo Stroessner was one of the few officers who remained loyal to the incumbent regime, and with the help of a few poor and under-equipped peasant militias, he defended Asunción and defeated the rebels within eight months of the start of the war.

3. Stroessner Era

Stroessner came to power in 1954 after a seven-year period of coups and counter-coups within the divided Colorado Party. By purging leaders of the opposition and co-opting their supporters, Stroessner guaranteed the longevity of his regime. The official Colorado Party became inextricably linked with the bureaucracy and the judiciary; resistance to the government was viewed as destabilizing an otherwise harmonious system.

Stroessner indoctrinated the populace by adorning schools, highways and cities throughout the country with his name. Stability was maintained by the unwavering loyalty of the army and the Colorado Party. Through repression and corruption, Stroessner dominated Paraguayan society for more than three decades.

During this period, Paraguay gained notoriety for harboring Nazis and exiled dictators. The most famous of these were Joseph Mengele, the Auschwitz concentration camp doctor known as the "Angel of Death," and Anastasio Somoza, the Nicaraguan dictator overthrown in 1979.

The Paraguayan economy prospered under Stroessner, particularly between 1975 and 1981. An economic boom in the late 1970s was driven by the joint Paraguay-Brazil construction of the world's largest hydroelectric plant in Itaipú, Paraguay. The electricity from this plant easily exceeds the needs of Paraguay, and the excess is sold to Brazil for around \$200 million a year. During its six-year construction period, the thousands of jobs provided to poor farmers in the area, coupled with the rise in land values and commodity prices, guaranteed prosperity for the rural population of Paraguay. Contraband also added to the fortunes of the country, although most of the wealth remained at the top with Stroessner and his lieutenants.

4. Fall of Stroessner

By 1987, economic conditions deteriorated as did Stroessner's health, and his control ebbed. The staunch loyalists of the Colorado Party were challenged by the emergence of factions that opposed Stroessner's personalist rule. While the supporters of Stroessner prevailed in the 1987 Colorado Party convention and nominated their candidate for another five-year term, cracks in the regime were evident.

At the same time, the fractious opposition began working more closely together. The National Accord formed in 1979 by four leading opposition parties -- the Authentic Radical Liberal Party (PLRA), the Revolutionary Febrerista Party, the Christian Democrats and the Popular Colorado Movement (MOPOCO), a Colorado dissident faction -- organized to challenge Stroessner.

As internal strife grew within the Colorado Party, resentment developed in the armed forces over compulsory retirements. The retirements were reportedly designed so that Stroessner's younger son, an air force colonel, could swiftly rise in the ranks and be groomed to succeed his father. In an attempt to remove another opponent to his succession plans, Stroessner tried to reassign Gen. Andrés

Rodríguez, the commander of the prestigious First Army Corps, as defense minister where he would have no direct control over any troops. Although opposed to the Stroessner succession ploy, Rodríguez, father-in-law to Stroessner's eldest son, had previously been a longstanding supporter of the dictator.

Rodríguez refused to relinquish his command of the First Army Corps, and, on February 2, 1989, he led a coup against Stroessner. The ensuing battle lasted a few hours with 40 to 50 casualties. Stroessner surrendered on the morning of February 3, and soon thereafter left for exile in Brazil.

5. 1989 Elections

Paraguay has experienced significant democratic gains since Stroessner's fall. Days after the coup, a large number of Stroessner functionaries were either in prison or in exile. Three months later, on May 1, presidential and congressional elections were held.

International observers witnessed serious irregularities in the balloting process, but concluded that the irregularities did not affect the final outcome. Rodríguez won the election by a margin of 54 percent. Observers did note, however, that the short time between the coup and elections did not provide opposition parties with sufficient time to organize or campaign. [See NDI's *The 1989 Paraguayan Elections: A Foundation for Democratic Change.*]

Since taking power, Rodríguez has promised to hand over the presidency to a democratically-elected civilian president. During the first years of the transition, critics doubted the sincerity of his rhetoric, pointing out that Rodríguez had been a close associate of Stroessner until nearly the day of the coup. The doubts seemed justified when many Colorado party members urged Rodríguez to consider running for re-election and the president neither encouraged nor discouraged the entreaties. Running again for the presidency ceased to be an option, however, when the constituent assembly retroactively prohibited the re-election of the president.

6. Municipal Elections

In the 1991 municipal elections, the Colorado Party won nearly 75 percent of the mayoral races in the country. Nevertheless, the opposition parties and independent movements made considerable electoral gains, the largest being the victory of independent candidate Carlos Filizzola of the Asunción For All (APT) Movement in Asunción. Many city councils, including that of Asunción, are now divided between the Colorados and the opposition (including independents, the Febreristas and the PLRA). Because of opposition mayoral victories in heavily populated areas, such as Asunción and the outlying areas, the majority of Paraguayans are now governed by a mayor from an opposition party.

Shortcomings existed in the administrative preparations for the municipal elections. These were most evident on election day, which was marked by confusion, if not chaos, in many areas.

Before election day, elections were suspended in 14 municipalities because voting lists or materials did not arrive in time or did not arrive at all. Problems on election day caused 15 more elections to be postponed for one month. International observers concluded that the problems on election day were due more to a lack of administrative experience than to political malfeasance. [See NDI's *Voting for Greater Pluralism: The May 26, 1991 Municipal Elections in Paraguay.*]

Official results were not released until a month after the elections. Before the release of the results, opposition leaders worried that the victory in Asunción would not be recognized by the government. President Rodríguez, however, acknowledged Filizzola's victory, after the timely release of results by SAKA, the nongovernmental consortium that conducted a parallel vote count.

7. The 1992 Constitution

A 193-member constituent assembly was elected in December 1991. International observers from the OAS noted considerable improvement in the administration of the constituent assembly elections as compared to the municipal elections.

About 55 percent of the Assembly members were from the Colorado Party, 30 percent from the PLRA, 15 percent from the independent Constitution For All, one from Febrerista and one from the Christian Democrat Party. The assembly promulgated a new constitution in July 1992, after which the assembly was dissolved.

There were two key provisions to the new constitution. The most contentious prohibited anyone from serving more than one term as president. Most assembly members agreed to the reelection prohibition, but heatedly debated whether the ban should include President Rodríguez. A conservative faction of the Colorado Party opposed to Rodríguez and members from the opposition parties created an unprecedented alliance and outvoted the Rodríguez-led supporters to retroactively prohibit reelection.

Another provision required that professional associations, unions and political parties elect their members by a direct vote. Colorado Party members, whose members represented a large portion of the rank and file of these organization, supported the direct election. The opposition parties questioned the practicality of directly electing leaders in all organizations.

Political leaders from all parties praised the constitution for providing an effective balance of power among the different branches of government. For instance, the congress now has the power to investigate government misconduct, censure ministers and impeach the president. Unlike in years past, the president now cannot dissolve congress. The new constitution decentralizes government by giving new powers and responsibilities to the municipalities and creating a departmental or state level of government.

CHAPTER THREE ELECTORAL FRAMEWORK

A. Overview

Voters cast five separate ballots in the May 9, 1993 elections: one for president and vice president; a national party list of senators; a departmental party list of deputies; governor of the department; and members of the departmental council. [See Appendix III, "Sample Ballots"] Voters from Asunción only cast three ballots because Asunción is not considered a separate department. Each of the elected officials will serve a five-year term. The president and governors were elected by a simple majority. The senators, deputies and members of the departmental councils were elected by proportional representation from a party list.

The Senate is composed of 45 members. The Chamber of Deputies has 80 members representing the 16 departments and the capital Asunción. Population determines the number of deputies from each department.

The new constitution decentralizes government by creating directly elected governors and departmental councils in each of the 16 departments. In an effort to give the departments more input on the national level, each party was required to field its own candidates for the Chamber of Deputies at the departmental level. Only the Colorado Party, the Authentic Radical Liberal Party (Partido Liberal Radical Auténtico - PLRA) and the new National Encounter movement fielded candidates in every departmental race.

B. Administrative Electoral Bodies

1. Central Electoral Board

The Central Electoral Board (Junta Electoral Central or JEC), which is composed of nine members, administered the general elections. The JEC included six Colorado Party members, two members of the PLRA and one Febrerista. The JEC depended on the Ministry of Interior for funding, but was administratively autonomous. The new constitution ended the mandate of the Central Electoral Board as well as the Sectional Board and the Electoral Tribunals. A new electoral framework will be defined by the congress elected in the 1993 elections.

2. Sectional Electoral Board

Subsidiary to the Central Board were 246 sectional electoral boards (juntas electorales seccionales or JESs). Each district had a JES, which had six members, four from the Colorado Party, one Febrerista and one PLRA member. One of the members, who was selected by a majority vote from the other members, served as president. The responsibilities of the sectional board included maintaining voter registration lists, designating polling sites, ensuring the availability of materials at

polling sites, resolving challenges that arise before and on election day, and collecting tally sheets from the voting precincts.

3. Electoral Tribunal

An electoral court (tribunal electoral) served in every judicial district in the country. There are eight electoral courts: a central tribunal (Tribunal Electoral Central) in Asunción and seven in the interior. Each electoral court had at least two members who were nominated by the president and approved by a board made up of the deans of the National and Catholic universities and representatives from the political parties in the National Assembly. The tribunals were responsible for ruling on complaints such as the eligibility of candidates and interpreting the electoral code.

C. Voter Registration

1. Accusations of Manipulation

Party members and other electoral officials informed an NDI delegation in March that the voter registration list contained 1.7 million names. Some 200,000 names were thought to be duplicates, deceased persons or minors. Opposition leaders feared that these names, which amounted to 12 percent of the total registered voters, could be manipulated to favor the Colorado Party.

In response, NDI brought two Panamanian voter registry experts to Paraguay in April to review the political parties' procedures for checking the registration list. The experts met with political party members, election officials and members of the OAS observer delegation. While the experts concurred with these officials that the list could be flawed and adequate access was not provided by the Central Electoral Board to check for errors, they also agreed with the opposition leaders that the potential problems in the list were not cause for a postponement of the elections. [See Appendix IV, "Voter Registration Chart."]

2. The Bureaucracy of Registration

The registration list was flawed in large part because of the bureaucracy on which it depends. Many eligible voters did not have identification cards, mandatory documentation for registration, and were thus unable to register to vote. The police, dependent on the armed forces, controlled the processing and distribution of national identity cards.

Party leaders believed that high ranking members of the military, who overtly supported the Colorado Party, would manipulate the registration process and exclude supporters of the opposition from voting. An OAS delegation, which visited the country in August, noted an effort to identify Colorado supporters during the registration process. Separate registration forms for national identity cards were issued to Colorado Party supporters and the required fee was waived for Colorado Party

members. Government officials allegedly charged a fee, prohibited by law, to those requesting a copy of their birth certificate.

In addition to political factors, administrative problems existed. When an identification card was issued, a number was assigned to the card according to the processing date without regard to location issued or date of birth. There was no minimum age for obtaining an identification card, enabling many minors to unlawfully register to vote. Many citizens who lost their identification cards were issued new cards and new numbers facilitating double registration. Once a citizen was registered, the JEC could not remove any deceased person from the list until a death certificate was received from the national registry. This government agency, plagued with inefficiency, did not have a system to make changes, correct errors or verify information on its own list.

3. Political Parties and the Registration Process

Opposition parties did not conduct any coordinated check of the registration list and did little to encourage their supporters to check voter information. For example, during the claims-and-objections period, parties registered only 10,000 complaints, about .5 percent of the total list. The inability to conduct a comprehensive check stemmed partly from a lack of computerized data and partly from the fact that parties were busy in a number of campaigns and elections. Seven elections in a five-year span stretched the time and resources of the parties.

Leaders of the opposition parties requested the JEC to provide computer disks of the voter registry to permit more rapid verification of the lists. The JEC provided a copy of the list to each of the political parties, but refused to provide the information on disk on the ground that the law required only a hard copy of the list be provided. In an attempt to appease the parties, the JEC installed computer terminals in the 16 departmental capitals and provided the parties with on-line capabilities to the system. However, the computer terminals allowed only for a name-by-name check, limiting the utility for the parties. Opposition parties were at a disadvantage because they did not have complete access to the voter registration information.

D. Balloting Process

There were about 9,000 voting tables throughout the country for the national elections. Each table was to service no more than 200 voters. Most municipalities located all of the voting tables at a few central sites to make it easier for the voters to arrive at the correct location.

At each polling table, elections were administered by a three-member board comprised of a president and two other electoral officials. In order to qualify as a board member, a citizen had to be literate and registered in the voting district in which he or she was to serve. Candidates were not eligible to serve as electoral officials.

The electoral code was modified in March 1993 to stipulate that the board be composed of two appointed members, one by the Colorado Party and the other by the PLRA, and one member selected by lottery from a pool of candidates from the remaining parties. The board president was also chosen by lottery or agreed upon among the three parties. The three officials were required to be present at the table in order to open the voting. If one or all of the officials were not present, the members of the JES assisted in opening the table and overseeing the voting.

Also present at the tables were the party pollwatchers. The electoral code permitted each political party to have one pollwatcher at each table and an unspecified number of site supervisors (*apoderados*) at each voting location. A recent change in the electoral code made the Sectional Electoral Boards solely responsible for the accreditation of all poll workers. Previously, a notary public could also accredit polling officials, pollwatchers and *apoderados*. The sponsors of the law, Colorado Party members, claimed the modifications were an attempt to safeguard against voter fraud. Opposition members countered that the modifications impeded the selection of polling officials and pollwatchers.

Between 5 a.m and 6:30 a.m. each table president retrieved the voting materials for his or her table. The president displayed his or her accreditation card to the JES who then supplied the materials: three copies of the voter registry, five bundles of ballots, the electoral code, a bottle of indelible ink, a pen, tape, a card indicating the table number, slips to verify voting and a ballot box.

Before the polls opened, electoral officials set up the voting tables. A blank copy of an *acta*, an official document on which the results of the polling table and the observations of the electoral officials and parties are recorded, was signed.

The polls opened at 7 a.m. The voter presented his or her identification card, without which he or she could not vote, to the officials at his or her voting table. An electoral official compared the information on the voter's identification card to that on the registry. The alphabetical voter registry (*padron*) at each table contained the first and last name of the voter, his or her address and national identification number. If there was only one discrepancy between the identification card and the registry (such as the first and last name reversed), the individual was allowed to vote. However, if two or more discrepancies appeared, the card appeared falsified, or an official noticed that the voter's finger was already marked with indelible ink, the individual was turned away.

Once the voter was approved by the election officials, an official signed the registry beside the voter's name in a duplicate registration list. The backs of the five ballots (or, as noted above, three ballots in Asunción) were signed by each of the three table officials and given to the voter who was then directed to a curtained booth. The ballots for president and vice president and governor contained the pictures of the candidates and the parties' names and colors. The ballots for senate, departmental deputy and departmental council contained only the parties' names and colors.

Behind the curtain, the voter marked his or her preferences on the ballots, folded the ballots, returned to the table at which the electoral officials sat, and individually deposited each ballot in a

transparent box. The voter's index finger was then marked with indelible ink to avoid duplicate voting. "Voted" was written next to the individual's name on the registration list. Finally, if requested, the voter was provided with a slip of paper signed by the three table officials verifying that he or she voted.

The polls closed at 5 p.m. Voters still in line at the time, however, were permitted to vote. Table officials and pollwatchers also voted at this time.

E. Counting Process

After the polls closed, the names of those people who did not vote were crossed off the registration list. The president of the polling site counted the names on the list of those who voted and recorded this number on the *acta*. The other officials and pollwatchers also signed the *acta*.

The tape that sealed the ballot box was broken and the ballots were taken out. Keeping the ballots face down, the president, with the help of other officials, opened the ballots and separated them in five stacks according to the five respective offices. The three table officials' signatures were verified on ballots separating out those which were determined invalid. A count was then taken of the total number of ballots. This number was compared to total number of voters as indicated on the registry.

If the number of marked ballots in the box exceeded the number of people who voted according to the official list, the president returned all the ballots to the box, removed randomly selected ballots and destroyed them. If the number of ballots cast, however, exceeded by 10 percent the number of people voting according to the list, all of the ballots from the polling table were nullified.

Each stack was then further separated according to party. In the presence of party pollwatchers and other observers, the election officials counted the ballots. The results, comments and objections from pollwatchers were recorded on the *acta*. Each party pollwatcher also received an official *acta* on which to mark the results.

By law, the public had access to the count at the polling tables. If a person was disrupting the process, the president of the table had the authority to remove that person. International observers, party officials and SAKÄ volunteers were usually at or around the tables.

When the count was completed, the electoral officials and the party pollwatchers signed the *actas*. The *actas* note any abnormalities witnessed by the electoral officials or the pollwatchers, the number of nullified and blank ballots, and any discrepancy between the number of ballots in the box and the number of people who voted according to the registry.

The registration lists and official *actas* were enclosed in a sealed envelope and transported to the Sectional Board in that voting district along with the remaining voting materials, marked ballots

and ballot boxes. The *actas* were tabulated at the 246 local boards, which in turn reported the results to the Central Electoral Board. Final results were released by the JEC the week following the elections.

CHAPTER FOUR

ACTORS IN THE POLITICAL PROCESS

A. Political Parties

For more than 100 years, two political parties have dominated the political landscape of Paraguay. The Colorado "red" Party has held the reigns of power for nearly half a century. The Liberal "blue" Party has served as the opposition during most of this time. Most citizens, especially in rural areas outside of Asunción, identify with one or the other. During the campaign, the party leaders easily targeted villages for their campaign because they already knew which supported the Colorado Party and which supported the Liberal Party.

Political leaders have attempted to organize third parties or independent movements previously. Most of these were unable to raise money or attract supporters and soon disbanded. Even those that have survived longer have not challenged the dominance of the traditional parties.

The Febrerista Party, for instance, formed by veterans of the Chaco War, governed Paraguay for about a year (1936-1937). The Febreristas exist to this day as a small party. Their representation in the 1989 congress allowed them to field a member on the Central Electoral Board and each of the Sectional Electoral Boards.

Hopes of a third force emerged again in 1991 with the victory of Carlos Filizzola in Asunción. Filizzola and his independent "Asunción For All (APT)" movement defeated the Colorado candidate demonstrating that the Colorado Party was not omnipotent and the PLRA was not the only viable alternative. The failure of all but a few independent candidates to win in the interior, however, demonstrated the strength of the two-party system. No Febrerista candidate won a mayoral race.

In the hopes of creating a sustained third political force in the country, the leaders of the Febrerista and APT supported independent candidate Guillermo Caballero Vargas for the 1993 presidential elections. These leaders and their candidate believed that political liberalization would nourish the fortunes of a third political forces since, in their view, the traditional political parties no longer represented the views of the population, especially the youth.

To some extent, the traditional political parties had strayed from the younger generation. Political parties emphasized personality and history while constituents worried about employment and education. The participation of a third party refocused the campaign to deal with issues of more concern to the voting populace.

There were nine candidates for president and eight national lists for senator. [See Appendix V, "List of Parties and Candidates"] Only three parties and movements fielded candidates in all the races.

1. National Republican Association - Colorado Party

(Asociación Nacional Republicana - Partido Colorado - ANR).

Presidential Candidate: Juan C. Wasmosy

Vice Presidential Candidate: Angel Seifart

Shortly after the Triple Alliance War, Bernardino Caballero founded the Colorado Party. While its leaders were from the elite class, the party solicited the support of all Paraguayans and appealed to their nationalism in the face of the occupying Brazilian troops.

During the Stroessner years, the Colorado Party retained its cohesiveness through a combination of cooptation and repression. Much like the Institutional Revolutionary Party in Mexico, the Colorado Party created parallel labor, teacher and women's organizations sympathetic to the ruling party. Stroessner traversed the countryside inaugurating newly built health centers, roads and bridges exhibiting the wonders of his party. When citizens questioned the rule of the party, they were repressed, often brutally. Many opposition leaders were imprisoned, tortured, exiled or executed.

As Stroessner grew older, party cohesion weakened. Leaders began to maneuver to succeed the dictator. When Stroessner promoted his son and positioned him to take over, his once erstwhile supporters rebelled. On February 3, 1989, Andres Rodriguez overthrew his commander-in-chief and sent him into exile.

Since the overthrow, party infighting has continued. Factions fought among each other for candidacies in the municipal and constituent assembly elections. This infighting climaxed in the presidential primaries on December 27, 1992. (See "Colorado Party Primaries.") After 10 tense days without final results, the party tribunal declared Juan Carlos Wasmosy and Angel Seifart the Colorado Party candidates.

Despite winning the nomination under questionable circumstances, the Wasmosy-Seifart team represents the more democratic faction of the Colorado Party. They advocate directly electing party candidates, privatizing key industries, reducing the government budget and continuing participation in the Mercosur free trade agreement.

Wasmosy was a leading member of a consortium that held lucrative contracts with the Itaipú Dam project sponsored during the Stroessner regime. Seifart was minister of education under President Rodríguez. President Rodríguez supported this team in the primaries as well as in the general elections.

2. Authentic Radical Liberal Party (*Partido Liberal Radical Auténtico-PLRA*).

Presidential Candidate: Domingo Laíno
Vice Presidential Candidate: Juan Manuel Benitez Florentin

The Liberal Party in Paraguay was founded in 1887. Three Liberal presidents have completed terms of office: Eduardo Shaerer (1912-1916), Eligio Ayala (1924-1928) and Dr. Eusebio Ayala (1932-1936). Shaerer was the first president ever to serve a full four-year term. Ayala led the ill-managed, but eventually successful, Chaco War against Bolivia.

During the Stroessner regime, the Liberal Party suffered division within its ranks. Debate focused on continued engagement in Paraguayan politics. Some argued that contesting elections and serving in Congress would maintain the influence of the party. Others countered that such participation merely legitimized an illegitimate regime. In 1977, those who chose not to participate created the Authentic Radical Liberal Party (PLRA), which is considered to this day the official liberal party in the country.

The PLRA is affiliated with the Liberal International and is the largest opposition party in Paraguay. In the 1991 municipal elections, the PLRA won in the large urban areas. The party won about 20 percent of the seats in the constituent assembly.

The PLRA is best known for its charismatic and courageous leader, Domingo Laíno. Laíno was a vocal critic of Stroessner and suffered numerous arrests and exile. Laíno was the presidential candidate in 1989 and again in 1993. Juan Manuel Benítez Florentin, the 1993 vice presidential candidate, is the president of the Party.

3. National Encounter (*Encuentro Nacional - EN*)

Presidential Candidate: Guillermo Caballero Vargas
Vice Presidential Candidate: María Victoria Brusqueti

Guillermo Caballero Vargas created this independent movement in 1991 as an alternative to the traditional Liberal and Colorado parties in Paraguay. Originally, the Encounter was conceived as an opposition alliance that was to include the PLRA, the Febreristas and other independent movements. But before the alliance could be negotiated, the PLRA and the Encounter fielded separate candidates and began to campaign independently. The Encounter did obtain the support of the Asunción For All movement and a faction of the Febrerista Party.

The popularity of Caballero Vargas grew through 1992 as many disaffected Colorado party members joined the ranks of the Encounter. Caballero Vargas initially invested a great deal of money in the movement giving it the ability to organize throughout the country. As the Encounter grew in popularity, the movement won the financial support from other citizens and relied less on Caballero's resources. The Encounter's 1993 vice presidential candidate, Maria Victoria Brusqueti, formerly the

leader of the lay workers of the Catholic church, was the first woman candidate for the vice presidency.

4. Other Independent Movements

Several independent movements registered candidates, some solely on a regional level and others nationwide. The presidential candidates included: Ricardo Canese, who broke with the APT when it joined forces with the Encuentro Nacional and who ran under the Social and Democratic Group (CDS); Leandro Prieto Yegros, an ex-Colorado member representing the Social Progressive Movement; Eduardo María Arce Schaerer of the Workers' Party; Gustavo Bader Ibañez of the Nationalist Socialist Party; Joel Atilio Casal of the National Movement of Ample Participation; and Abraham Zapag Bazas of the Liberal Party. The movements that fielded candidates on a regional level included: the White Party, United National Regional Political Movement, Political Regional Conception of All Movement and Popular Paranense Political Regional Movement.

B. Military

The armed forces comprises three branches -- the army, navy and air force -- with a total 24,000 men. The ministry of defense is an administrative body that issues paychecks and buys supplies. The Congress has minimal oversight of the military budget, which by some estimates accounts for nearly 33 percent of the national budget. (Military expenditures are a relatively modest 2 percent of the Gross Domestic Product.) Troop numbers and military funding levels have not been cut in the five years since Stroessner's overthrow.

Throughout Paraguayan history, the armed forces have had a prominent role in politics and the economy. When Stroessner came to power in 1954, he demanded that his officers be loyal members of the Colorado Party. Since 1954 until the present day, the military, and especially the army, has been involved in the country's politics, government and economy. Military officers campaigned for Colorado candidates and ensured their victory on election day. Military officers held high posts in government and managed key state-owned companies.

Holding high government and industry posts has allowed many military officials to become intimately involved in the illicit economy as well. Many believe the military controls the flow of contraband, stolen vehicles and drugs through the country. In December 1992, Col. Luis Gonzalez Rojas provided documents that implicated the military in trafficking stolen vehicles from Brazil for sale in Bolivia. When Gonzalez publicized his allegations, he was arrested on charges of disobeying the chain of command and taken to an undisclosed location. Only under intense pressure from Gonzalez's lawyers, the press and U.S. Ambassador Jonathan Glassman did the police finally reveal the location of its prisoner. Gonzalez Rojas served a 90-day sentence and was released. Three generals are now on trial.

While corruption and contraband remain sensitive issues for the military, the armed forces have recently begun to address past human rights abuses. Last year, government officials discovered "files of terror" in the police headquarters, detailing human rights abuses during the Stroessner

regime. The files included lists of victims, dossiers of opposition leaders and even cassette tapes of torture sessions. Documents also revealed cooperation among the dictatorships of Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay in extraditing political prisoners during the 1980s. Upon the discovery of these files, President Rodríguez called for a full investigation, which led to life sentences for the former chief of investigation of the police and three other former members of the national intelligence agency.

During the campaign, candidates discussed depoliticization of the armed forces. The new constitution prohibits officers from actively participating in partisan activities. (The electoral code does allow military personnel to remain party members if they registered before 1991.) During the campaign, presidential candidates, including Wasmosy, promised to refocus the military on its primary role of national defense. This refocus complemented Wasmosy's privatization plans that would inevitably remove many military officers from their current positions as company managers.

Despite these promises, many military officers remain active in the Colorado Party. During the Colorado Party primaries, military support was crucial for Wasmosy. When it appeared that his rival Argaña had won anyway, several officers threatened military intervention. Military officers supported Wasmosy because of Argaña's vociferous accusations of corruption within the armed forces. Argaña alleged that the military officers, especially Rodríguez and army commander Gen. Lino Oviedo, had usurped power and resources from the state and party. If elected, Argaña promised to return power to the Colorado Party.

Military officials continued to play a visible role in Wasmosy's general campaign. Some military analysts in Paraguay characterized Oviedo as the "de facto campaign manager" for Wasmosy. During a luncheon in the Ministry of Interior, Oviedo assured Colorado officials, including presidential candidate Wasmosy, that "[the armed forces would] govern together with the glorious Colorado Party forever and ever [...] no matter who it pleases, bother or hurts, no matter who may protest." Other high ranking officers, such as then Vice Admiral of Navy Eduardo Gonzalez Petit, also supported Wasmosy and openly doubted that an opposition candidate could effectively command the armed forces.

C. Church

Before 1989, the Catholic Church played a crucial role in supporting and providing a safe haven to opponents of the dictatorship. As the political process opened in Paraguay, the Catholic Church concentrated its support for democracy on civic education. For these elections, the Church recruited members from its congregations to participate in the civic education workshops organized by Decidamos (See "Nongovernmental Organizations.") The Church also provided crucial assistance to SAKÁ by providing rooms to conduct its training sessions and encouraging its youth to participate in the project.

Protestant churches have also been active in supporting the democratic process in Paraguay. The Committee of Churches for Emergency Aid (CIPAE), founded in 1976 to address human rights violations, processed the evidence uncovered in the "files of terror" on computer files. Other

activities of the CIPAE today include legal defense for indigent citizens and victims of human rights abuses and educational programs on human rights and democracy. For the elections, the general director of CIPAE served as a spokesman for SAKĀ and encouraged the members of CIPAE to participate.

D. Media

Radio is the primary source of information in Paraguay, with television a distant second. There are many radio stations in the country with frequencies that reach well into the interior. For the campaign, the government allocated free air time on radio and television to all political parties. The free time was only available a few days before election day and was distributed equally among all candidates.

There are five daily newspapers in Paraguay. Newspapers reach a smaller audience because of their cost and limited circulation. The 12 percent illiteracy rate also impedes wide readership.

Nowhere is the political opening more manifest than in the media. Journalists pursued sensitive issues such as government corruption and past human rights abuses without fear of reprisal. When Rodríguez's son-in-law, Gustavo Saba, was under indictment for trafficking arms, the story ran daily in newspapers, on the radio and on television.

While the state does not censure media coverage, a small group of people own the main media organs and sometimes exert their influence. Nicholas Bo, a supporter of Argaña during the Colorado primaries, owns Radio Cardinal, which has a large audience in the interior, the daily newspaper *Noticias* and one of the two television stations in the country.

Saba, the owner of the other television station, supported Wasmosy during the primary and the general elections. During the primaries, Argaña did not appear on his station's news coverage and had few advertisements on the station. One journalist from the station referred to it as a "quasi-state-owned enterprise" because of the close relationship between the ownership and the government.

During the campaign, newspaper and television journalists vigorously covered the campaigns and asked candidates hard questions concerning policy, character and personal business transactions. Journalists were particularly adept at uncovering and documenting, with photographs, misuse of government property by Colorado Party candidates.

For the first time in Paraguay's history, the three major presidential candidates participated in a televised debated moderated by well known television analysts and newspaper columnists. While journalists extensively covered the campaigns of the major candidates, they also wrote stories on regional candidates and issues. The daily *Noticias* published a weekly voter-education supplement that listed candidates in different regions, explained voting procedures and offered suggestions to detect voter fraud.

While reporting before, during and after the elections undoubtedly contributed to the transparency of the process, some of the efforts of the press did not play a constructive role. For election day, Channel 9, Radio Ñanduti and the daily *ABC Color* organized a nationwide exit poll designed to project the winner of the presidential race immediately after the close of the polls. Other radio and television stations conducted exit polls in major cities. The use of exit polls in a country with a populace unaccustomed to expressing their political beliefs worried many leaders. International observers were also concerned because the polls did not utilize any statistical methodology and it would be impossible to calculate a margin of error. Soon after the elections, three radio stations had projected three different winners in the presidential race.

Since opposition members of the JEC did not trust the official channels for issuing complaints, they reported any irregularities to the press. Many times the reporting on these irregularities led to constructive solutions; oftentimes, however, the reporting exaggerated the allegations and caused unnecessary tensions. The day after elections, an opposition member of the Board reported that some vote tallies had arrived with the envelopes opened. His speculation that they had been altered and the subsequent reporting of this speculation soon created a mob in front of the Central Election Board headquarters. A last minute agreement brokered by the observers of the OAS mission avoided escalation and violence.

E. Nongovernmental Organizations

1. Decidamos

Decidamos is a consortium of 12 nongovernmental organizations founded in 1989 to provide leadership training to civic organizers throughout the country. Trainers have conducted workshops for church organizations, neighborhood committees, student and women's groups as well as for private citizens. Topics have included the meaning of elections and voting process, the role and functions of local government and the significance of the new constitution.

In preparations for the 1993 elections, Decidamos sponsored a nationwide civic-education campaign. The group created 14 different rap and polka jingles that were aired over the major radio stations. Decidamos also produced *Ña Demo*, a play that depicted the conversations between a mother, Ña (Guarani for Mrs.) Demo and her three children. The three children represented different types of voters: one is apathetic; the other is nervous because he is voting for the first time; and the last is politically active.

They also published a training manual on the voting process and conducted "train the trainers" workshops for the major political parties, including the Colorado Party. With only two weeks before elections, the Central Electoral Board solicited the group to train 25,000 polling officials.

On election day, Decidamos played a crucial role in safeguarding the election process. Volunteers manned booths at major polling sites instructing voters where and how to vote. The

volunteers served as a clearinghouse of information for the many international observer groups. Decidamos also played a crucial role in the SAKÃ quick count, described below.

2. SAKÃ

For the 1991 municipal elections, three nongovernmental organizations formed a consortium to conduct parallel vote counts in Paraguay's largest municipalities.¹ All are nongovernmental organizations that have worked in political, economic and social development in Paraguay. None of the members of the SAKÃ consortium were affiliated with political parties or participated in any partisan activities.

In 1991, SAKÃ projected the winner of the mayoralty race hours after the polls closed. Many believe that the timely release of these results precluded tampering with the official count in the Central Electoral Board. Referring to the SAKÃ results, President Rodríguez acknowledged Filizzola's victory on election night.

To increase the political representation of the SAKÃ consortium and take advantage of other expertise, three other groups were incorporated for the 1993 elections: the Center for Democratic Studies, Decidamos and the Center for Information and Resources Development. The Catholic and Protestant Churches also lent assistance by recruiting from their youth groups, providing church facilities for training and having their leaders serve as SAKÃ spokesmen.

NDI provided funding and technical assistance to SAKÃ to conduct a count using a sample representing a cross section of the Paraguayan population. The sample comprised 20 percent of the polling sites in the country and had a margin of error of 2.5 percent. SAKÃ and NDI decided that a quick count would provide results that were not only accurate, but timely.

To support the quick count results and to provide results in other races, SAKÃ also conducted a comprehensive count for the presidential, congressional and gubernatorial races. These comprehensive results permitted opposition leaders and electoral officials to determine the winners of a close governors race in Concepción as well as key seats in the Chamber of Deputies.

In preparation for election day, SAKÃ instructors conducted workshops throughout the country teaching volunteers about their election day duties. SAKÃ recruited some 5,000 volunteers through church youth groups and used church facilities to conduct training sessions. In a pastoral letter, the bishop responsible for the country's youth groups urged members to participate in SAKÃ, an organization he described as one "that has helped guarantee the respect of the popular will." The

¹The original members of the consortium were: The European Center Consortium for International Cooperation and Cultural Exchange; The Center for Documentation and Studies; and The Social Sciences Group. The Center for Democratic Studies, Decidamos, The Committee of Churches for Emergency Aid, and the Center for Information and Resources for Development joined the SAKÃ consortium in 1993.

bishop overseeing the lay-workers groups wrote a similar letter. [See Appendix VI, "Pastoral Letters"]

On election day, SAKÃ volunteers were present at approximately 7,000 voting tables throughout the country to collect vote tallies. In most voting places, volunteers accomplished their tasks with the cooperation of the polling officials. In some areas, however, polling officials refused access and even threatened to remove them from the polling station. [See Appendix VII, "Press Coverage of SAKÃ"]

In Asunción, the state-owned telephone company cut SAKÃ's phone lines on election day. (See "Election Day.") Despite these challenges, SAKÃ released presidential results by the next morning. This results, and the congressional results released a few days later, provided an important benchmark for the official results. Opposition leaders knew they had lost the presidency and the Colorado Party leaders knew the opposition controlled the congress. The official results mirrored the SAKÃ results. [See Appendix VIII, "SAKÃ and official results"]

F. Organization of American States

The Organization of American States (OAS) had observed the 1989 national and the 1991 municipal and constituent assembly elections. For the 1993 national elections, a group of five observers arrived in March and the mission increased to 60 by election day.

In August 1992, a five-member OAS technical team traveled to Paraguay to meet with election officials and political party leaders to investigate the transparency of the registration process. Opposition leaders were particularly worried about the involvement of the military in the preparations for elections. At the time, military personnel were allegedly working in the computer room of the Central Electoral Board and were also accused of transferring computer terminals from the Electoral Board office to the Colorado headquarters. Opposition members also protested the decision by the Board to not provide computer disks that contained voter information and claimed that they had been denied access to registration preparations.

As a result of their meetings with the opposition, the OAS observers urged the Electoral Board to form a commission in which opposition leaders could review procedures and programs being used. The observers suggested that commission members have access to the preparations regarding registration, printing of ballots and the placement of polling tables. After the members of the OAS delegation left the country, party members and election officials did not follow up on the proposal.

The OAS developed a close working relationship with board officials during the last four years. During the 1993 election process, OAS observers worked full-time in the office of the Election Board and oversaw the compilation of the registration list and other preparations for election day. The close relationship allowed the OAS to monitor the Board and make suggestions when necessary.

The trust between the two groups also facilitated the OAS in investigating charges leveled by the opposition.

Developing this relationship came at some expense, however. Opposition parties, and even some foreign diplomats, criticized the OAS for accommodating the Electoral Board and not being sufficiently firm in questioning shortcomings in the process. Opposition leaders requested additional observer groups for fear that the OAS would not act in a decisive manner should fraud occur.

Unlike the other groups, though, the OAS was able to field a large number of observers for an extended period of time. Observers worked in seven district offices located in the major urban areas of the countries. These observers worked in the cities and the outlying rural areas monitoring preparations including the selection of polling officials, the delivery of voting materials and the distribution of voting tables. On election day, observers visited 480 polling sites in the country representing about 80 percent of the electorate.

CHAPTER FIVE PREPARATIONS FOR ELECTIONS

A. The Candidates and the Issues

No presidential candidate would have a chance for victory if he or she could not deliver speeches in both official languages of Paraguay. Candidates traveled throughout the country addressing potential voters in a mixture of Spanish and Guaraní, emphasizing Guaraní the further they traveled from Asunción. News articles often quoted candidates in Guaraní and only occasionally provided a Spanish translation. Newspaper and television advertisements -- in Spanish -- fill the printed pages and the airwaves.

Personalities dominated much of the campaign debate, but candidates addressed specific issues concerning the economy, the military and the bureaucracy. In an unprecedented presidential debate, televised before a live audience, the three candidates stated their positions on privatization, membership in the Mercosur common market, the government budget and the role of the military. There was little difference among the three.

"Change" was the overriding theme of the presidential campaign. For Wasmosy, change meant a transformation from the old-style populist politics to a more fiscally responsible government and an open economy. The Wasmosy campaign fought a bitter battle with its conservative rural membership over this change of strategy and it almost split the party. Conservative Colorado members accused him of being a closet liberal and tagged him "Mbatana," a Guaraní name for a rooster with red feathers (Colorado Party colors) on top and blue feathers (PLRA colors) on the bottom.

During the general campaign, Wasmosy continued the message of change adding only that the Colorado Party, with its expected plurality in congress and good relationship with the armed forces, would be able to modernize the government. Wasmosy assured voters that he would not lay off workers according to their political affiliation and insinuated that an opposition president would do otherwise. Ironically, only a couple of weeks before, Rodriguez requested the resignations of the minister of education when he refused to actively campaign for the Colorado Party. A successful businessman, Wasmosy also promised to support a nationwide job training program that would provide workers with the skills to be competitive in the international marketplace. Wasmosy's campaign slogan was "To Move Ahead" (*Para Salir Adelante*).

Láino advocated change in much the same way as Wasmosy. He promised liberalization of the economy and a more efficient government. Láino also proposed the renegotiation of the agreement with Brazil regarding the sale of excess electricity generated by the Itaipu Dam to third countries. The treaty, he explained, was an agreement between two dictatorships and did not represent the will of the people.

Láino's courageous opposition to the dictatorship for over 20 years made him a logical choice to lead the country during its return to democracy, thought his supporters in the Liberal Party. His campaign slogan, "The Only Alternative" (*La Unica Alternativa*), said just that. A tradition of opposing military rule had its consequences, however. Of the three candidates, the military feared Láino the most. Many officers had been taught that Láino was the enemy and a threat to national security. It was unthinkable to these officers that the "enemy" could now become the commander-in-chief. To appease these worries, Láino called for a national civil-military dialogue in which high-ranking officers would promise to respect the results of the election. Rodriguez thought the dialogue was unnecessary, however, and the meeting did not take place.

"Guillermo," as supporters and opponents alike referred to Caballero Vargas, championed change away from the traditional two-party system. Caballero's platform did not differ from those of the other two candidates, but he promised to be more effective since he was not restrained by party ideology or patronage. Most of his support came from the professional middle class in Asunción and in particular young people. One analyst half jokingly asserted that Caballero Vargas would do much better in the 1998 elections because many of his supporters would then be old enough to vote. The Caballero Vargas' campaign slogan was "The Victory of Hope" (*La Victoria de la Esperanza*).

Caballero Vargas distinguished himself somewhat from the other candidates by defending landless farmers from accusations made by a high-ranking government official. Despite one of the lowest population densities in the Western Hemisphere, many poor farmers do not own enough land on which to survive. Land invasions are common. When the Minister of Interior referred to these invaders as "terrorists," Caballero Vargas vociferously disputed the charge and promised to make fallow land owned by large plantations available to the landless.

B. Last Minute Concerns and Changes

As in past elections, the Colorado Party enjoyed substantial institutional and financial advantages over the other parties and party stalwarts were not hesitant to use them. When it appeared that the Colorado Party would not be able to agree on a candidate, for instance, Colorado members proposed adopting the Uruguayan *Ley de Lemas* that permitted parties to field several candidates in an election. This law was particularly attractive to the Colorado Party because it would allow the party candidate with the most votes to claim votes cast for other candidates of the same party. When the Colorado Party finally agreed on a candidate, the *Ley de Lemas* proposal was dropped.

Proposing a drastic change in the electoral code only months before the elections indicated that the Colorado-dominated congress would not hesitate to modify the electoral framework to its advantage. While these legislative maneuvers were legal, they did not follow the spirit of the law which was designed to provide a dependable system in which voters would have confidence.

With less than six weeks before the elections, members of congress again sought to change the election law to suit the needs of the ruling party. Members of the Colorado Party perceived the

race to be a choice between the opposition and the ruling party. They worried that Colorado polling officials would be outnumbered when administering the voting tables. Therefore, they proposed increasing the number of officials at each table from three to five and requiring table officials to work only at the site in which they were registered.

The number of polling officials eventually remained at three, but they were required to work only in the site in which they were registered. The timing of the proposal -- six weeks before elections -- created delays in election preparations. Since the Central Electoral Board did not know how many officials would preside at each table, it was forced to delay the printing of its tally sheets (which required signatures from the polling officials) and the distribution of election supplies. Training workshops conducted by political parties and nongovernmental organizations were suspended because these groups were unsure if the people they were training would be eligible to work in other parts of the country.

One sponsor of the bill noted to an international observer that the proposal was designed to neutralize "the opposition advantage" at the polling table and avoid possible fraud. Opposition members countered that the modifications would impede the selection of polling officials since they had intended to transport many volunteers from Asunción to the interior. This was particularly true of the National Encounter that had much of its support in the capital.

Throughout the campaign, the Colorado Party used the government bureaucracy to its advantage. President Rodríguez solicited a "voluntary" donation to the Colorado campaign from all public employees. Rodríguez was widely criticized for this solicitation, which was mandatory during Stroessner's rule, and some high-ranking government officials publicly stated that they would not contribute to the campaign since they work for the state and not the Colorado Party. When Minister of Education and Culture Raúl Sapena Brugado refused to participate in the campaign and solicit the support of the thousands of teachers under his supervision, President Rodríguez demanded his resignation. Other high level officials in the ministry resigned in support of Sapena.

Soliciting the support of the bureaucracy -- notwithstanding cohesion -- is not explicitly prohibited by the electoral law. Individuals, whether or not they work for the state, may support a political party and participate in campaign activities. Political parties are forbidden, however, from utilizing state resources for partisan activities. Opposition party members accused the Colorado Party of accepting millions of dollars in campaign contributions from the proceeds of the Itaipu Dam. During the campaign, Colorado candidates routinely arrived in government vehicles to party rallies. In Ciudad del Este, a journalist was beaten by two Colorado Party supporters when he photographed candidates getting out of clearly marked government vehicles.

Members of the Colorado Party leadership did little to ease tensions during the campaign. During a campaign stop in the interior, the president of the Colorado Party, Blas Riquelme, promised to organize a "special tricks commission" for the elections and he exhorted Colorado Party followers to win the elections "by assault." Although he claimed he was joking, his statements alarmed

opposition supporters and contributed to their suspicions about the ruling party's commitment to fair elections.

In a separate incident shortly before election day, Army Commander Lino Oviedo addressed an audience of Colorado officials and government employees vowing that the armed forces and the Colorado Party "would co-govern for centuries and centuries, complain who will." Lino did not claim to be joking. Political leaders in Paraguay and international observers, including President Carter, expressed grave misgivings about Oviedo's comments and urged the armed forces to respect the results of the elections no matter who wins. [See Appendix IX, "NDI/Council Pre-Election Statement"]

C. The Final Days

The electoral law prohibited the publication of poll results two weeks before elections. On the last day that publication was allowed, most polls showed Caballero Vargas with about 35 percent of the vote followed by Wasmosy at 27 percent and Laino at 24 percent. A large percentage of the population -- about 13 percent -- was still undecided.

The polls also indicated many supporters would split their votes, choosing Caballero for the president while relying on their party's list for other offices. As the campaign drew to a close, however, Wasmosy regained the support of the rural areas by emphasizing the accomplishments of the party and its unique ability to govern. Luis Argaña, Wasmosy's nemesis, made few public appearances and even disappeared for a few days before he was located at his ranch in the interior. Television advertisements depicted the Colorado Party as a united and happy family, downplaying Wasmosy, the controversial candidate from the primary elections. The final Colorado Party rally, utilizing a stage bathed in red filled with candidates and their families, perpetuated the image.

The final party rallies for the opposition parties took place in Asunción days before the election. Thousands of supporters dressed in party colors gathered in the capital city of Asunción to eat, drink and listen to music. Candidates gave motivating speeches about the new democratic Paraguay. With the exception of a few disturbances that were controlled almost immediately by police, for the most part police stood by unobtrusively.

In the final days preceding the elections, the Wasmosy campaign gained momentum. Polls could not quantify the surge, but the feeling was that many Colorado members who initially opposed their candidate had decided to remain loyal to the party.

Despite the many concerns about the process, Paraguayans in the last few days of the campaign became cautiously optimistic that the elections would be conducted in a relatively fair manner. During the last couple of days, party supporters concentrated their efforts on celebrating the accomplishments and inevitable victory of their respective parties. Supporters drove through the city honking their horns and hung party flags outside their car windows, creating festive atmosphere with few confrontations.

To some extent, the involvement of the international community helped foster this optimism. The OAS brokered a formal agreement that promoted the unimpeded participation of all citizens and rejected any attempt to disrupt the electoral process. The three candidates signed the agreement and with much fanfare presented it to the OAS observers. A letter from President Bill Clinton supporting the democratic process in Paraguay also received wide coverage. President Carter's anticipated arrival boosted public confidence because Paraguayans realized that the eyes of the international community were on their country.

CHAPTER SIX

ELECTION DAY OBSERVATIONS

A. Overview

Reports on the administration of the election varied from region to region. In and around Asunción, citizens were able to locate their sites and vote with relative ease. There were few reports of violence or intimidation. The bombing of a television station owned by a critic of President Rodriguez election day morning and the cutting of the independent vote count's phone line at midday, however, tainted the perception that all was well in the capital.

In the interior, where traditional party bosses still exert a great deal of influence, voters complained of intimidation by Colorado Party members and misadministration by election officials. In some areas, opposition party members were not able to field poll watchers or nominate poll workings to be present at the polling tables. Observers also noted with concern the temporary closing of the borders designed to impede the access of thousands of Paraguayans who were not in the country.

Premature celebrations by both the Colorado Party and the PLRA, led by their respective presidential candidates, also created tense situations. Ironically, Colorado Party supporters after having criticized the reliability of exit polls, took to the streets in celebration because their candidate held a slim lead in one such poll.

B. Delegation Observations

1. Asunción

Two groups visited polling tables in Asuncion and the outlying municipalities including Fernando de La Mora, Lambaré, San Lorenzo and San Antonio. In almost every site visited observers noted that polls opened on time and each table was adequately supplied with ballot boxes, ballots and indelible ink. Election officials and pollwatchers represented three parties or independent movements at almost every table visited. Party officials expressed fears the day before that flaws in the registration list would prevent voters from locating their polling table. On election day, most voters found their tables without problems.

Many of the polling sites in and around Asunción contained 100 or more tables creating large crowds of people. The crowded conditions caused some confusion, but problems were usually resolved amiably among voters and election officials. In several sites, space limitations forced the placement of the voting booth (*cuarto oscuro*) a considerable distance from the voting table. The positioning required a voter to carry his or her unmarked ballot through crowded lines of voters and back again after voting.

International observers also visited polling sites in which violence had allegedly erupted or threatened to erupt. In one site on the outskirts of Asunción, NDI/Council observers witnessed a few drunk men threatening voters. Police controlled them and they soon dispersed. Most allegations of violence turned out to be spontaneous outbreaks, usually prompted by alcohol, eventually controlled by police. The OAS observer in this and other sites, often mediated between party pollwatchers to defuse tense situations.

2. Bombing of Channel 13

In the early morning hours of election day, three unidentified men shot approximately 38 bullets from an automatic weapon at the transformer of Channel 13. The owner of Channel 13 was a strong critic of President Rodriguez and Wasmosy. Following the shots, the assailants threw a grenade at the station's antennae, but it did little damage to its target. A security guard was slightly injured in the explosion. Destroying the transformer, however, kept the television station off the air for nearly five hours. The state-owned electric company urgently installed a new transformer and the station went on the air around midday.

The assailants were not identified, but the director of the station accused "high ranking military officials" of the attack. In its post-election statement, the NDI/Council delegation urged authorities to investigate the attack. The investigation did not lead to any suspects.

3. Interior

NDI/Council observers traveled to their sites the day before elections to meet with election officials, candidates, security officials and OAS observers. During the meetings the observers learned about problems specific to their assigned areas.

The NDI/Council observers noted that in some areas, polling officials did not represent all of the political parties. Most came from the Colorado Party. In Cecilio Baez, about 30 kilometers from Colonel Oviedo, opposition party nominees were not included in the lottery to chose polling officials. In Pedro Juan Caballero, when observers asked the representative which parties they represented, they often did not know how to answer and consulted first with the Colorado Party representative at the table. In other tables, pollwatchers from other parties who were absent were replaced by Colorado pollwatchers.

In Concepción, opposition members complained that the Sectional Electoral Board had moved 10 percent of the voting tables only two days before the elections. Election officials countered that the move would make voting more convenient for people living in rural areas. Many voters, however, were not informed of the move.

Election officials assured observers that the tables were well supplied and that there would not be any problems in the administration of the polls on election day. Party leaders also did not anticipate problems on election day. In the Sectional Electoral Board office, observers inspected the

computer terminal that was being used to inform citizens on where to vote. Everyone who inquired located his or her name and voter information on the computer.

Intimidation was also noted by the observers in many areas. In Simon Bolivar, close to Colonel Oviedo, a Colorado Party member pulled a gun on a Liberal Party member. Police stood close to the polling station in an intimidating manner. Also in Colonel Oviedo, Colorado vehicles and supporters obstructed the road to the voting site, acting as a processing site for all voters. The observers noticed that many party members were consuming alcohol, prohibited by the electoral code. Inebriated party members threatened voters and tried to create disturbances.

Opposition candidates in Ciudad del Este noted the tremendous advantages that the Colorado candidate for governor, Carlos Barreto, had over the other candidates. These representatives alleged that Barreto had utilized financial resources and vehicles from the state-owned Itaipu Dam. They did not provide specifics, however. In Minga Guazú, the team noticed Barreto and a number of his supporters campaigning in the voting site. Polling officials also told the group that Colorado members had harassed and intimidated citizens in the preceding days causing tension in the community.

In the sites near the border, observers checked allegations that the borders had been sealed. In Asuncion, the Colorado Party requested a judicial order to prevent Paraguayan citizens residing outside of the country to enter the country on election day and vote. (Article 120 of the Constitution stipulates that only those citizens living in the country can vote.) Colorado members accused the PLRA of planning to transport truckloads of citizens residing in Argentina into the country on the morning of the elections.

The day before the elections, a Paraguayan court issued a judicial order closing the border between Paraguay and Argentina. The ban was to apply between the moment of the ruling until the close of the polls the following day.

Opposition leaders strongly objected to the measure noting that some 30,000 citizens were detained at the border and would be prohibited from assisting in the campaign of their political parties. The following day, Wasmosy and his running mate Seifart publicly opposed the closing and requested that the judge revoke his order. The court lifted the order and the borders were reopened about one hour before the polls opened.

In Ciudad del Este, Paraguayans warned the delegation that the officials had threatened to close the bridge connecting Brazil and Paraguay on election day. There were no reports of anyone actually being refused entry, however, and it was not reported as a problem on election day.

In most areas, the polls on election day opened on time. In Pedro Juan Caballero, however, some polls opened late because materials had not been delivered or because officials did not have a key to access the polling site. These problems were resolved quickly and voting commenced shortly thereafter. Many voters arrived early and the polling sites were filled. Although the process was slow

and people had to wait as long as two hours in line, most did not seem bothered. Some voters arrived at the site or table where they had voted in the last election and their name did not appear on the role. Most solicited assistance from party representatives, but a few left without voting.

Administration of the polls went fairly well. In Ciudad del Este, the polling sites were crowded, but voting was orderly. Because materials could not be distributed from the central Junta office quickly enough, there were some delays in voting. Aside from a minor incident in which party representatives sharply disagreed over the seating of election workers, the delegation did not notice any problems in the voting and its presence was usually welcomed. Voting in Hernandarias, Juan Leon Mallorquin, and Presidente Franco proceeded smoothly. At all three sites, voting had begun on time. In Hernandarias, however, the police presence was far more overt than in other localities visited. Officials in Hernandarias also reported difficulty in locating voters' names.

Despite the reported incidents, the delegation in Ciudad del Este was impressed with the competence with which the elections were administered, especially in comparison with past elections. The parties appeared to be well represented at polling sites. The group was also impressed with the patience of the voters who often stood in line for long periods of time to vote, and with the festive atmosphere observed in several voting sites.

In Simon Bolivar and Cecilio Baez, near Colonel Oviedo, tensions ran high. Colorado Party electoral officials were unpleasant and rude, and the pollwatchers appeared overwhelmed and nervous. At many tables, all three officials were from the Colorado Party. At one table, Colorado officials collected identification cards and called people to vote. The officials at this table, and at other tables, refused to sign the ballots, making them invalid.

The delegation observed the vote counting in both Hernandarias and Ciudad del Este. In Hernandarias, counting proceeded without incident, although SAKÃ workers were reportedly pressured to abandon their work by local Colorado officials. In Ciudad del Este, the counting proceeded in general without problems.

In Concepción, counting began promptly at 5 p.m. For the most part, the process was organized and there were no problems. One incident was observed, however, where there were 17 more ballots cast at a table than there were names of people recorded to have voted. A shouting and shoving match ensued but was quelled by the police and election officials.

Another incident after the voting and ballot counting threatened to explode into violence. Some members of the Liberal Party accused a Colorado party member of stealing a ballot box and claimed he had it in his home. A crowd of around 200 people formed outside of the man's home and demanded the ballot box. Two members of the NDI/Council delegation team entered the home to investigate the situation. The man accused of stealing the box said that he had turned the box over to election officials as soon as the votes had been counted. After about an hour the crowd dispersed and the police remained in the street to guard the house.

CHAPTER SEVEN MOVING FORWARD

This report has detailed the developments before, during and after the elections in Paraguay. Much has improved since the overthrow of Stroessner in 1989. For the most part, Paraguayan leaders and election officials have succeeded in creating a framework in which the will of the citizenry is accurately reflected at the polls.

As the country moves from democratic transition to consolidation, political leaders should seek to strengthen the country's democratic institutions. Citizens will demand that these institutions fulfill their responsibilities in a professional and forthright manner. The election apparatus in Paraguay is no exception. While there has been improvement, problems remain. Many of the problems relate to image, but some are more profound. These problems can be addressed by fostering meaningful participation of nongovernmental organizations, political parties and the public at large.

As international observers, NDI and the Council note the following concerns and offer several suggestions where appropriate. This chapter is divided into three parts: 1) structure and framework; 2) oversight and administration; and 3) the role of political parties and nongovernmental organizations.

A. Structure and Framework

The mandate of the Central Electoral Board and the electoral courts ended with the completion of these elections. Before the next elections, scheduled for 1996, Congress will create new administrative and judicial electoral bodies. Reorganizing the entire electoral structure provides a unique opportunity for Paraguayan leaders to address the concerns that arose during the last five years.

During the three elections for which NDI observers have been present, the public has not demonstrated total confidence in the electoral structure. Since two thirds of the electoral board members were also members of the Colorado Party, opposition supporters and leaders believed the structure to be biased to favor the ruling party. The electoral courts were the only organisms with independent members, but most of the courts' authority was stripped before election day.

The ad hoc approach of legislators in modifying the electoral code also damaged the confidence of the electorate. Members of congress usually proposed changes to the electoral code in response to a crisis in the Colorado Party perpetuating the belief that the electoral framework was not completely objective or autonomous.

NDI and the Council believe that the new structures charged with the administration and arbitration of the elections should conduct their business independent of political party developments. From the outcome, rules should be defined and not altered to accommodate the needs of any party

or candidate. As Congress debates the new electoral structure, NDI offers the following suggestions and observations.

1. *Congress should create a nonpartisan, professional Central Electoral Board.*

In 1989, political parties nominated the members of the Central Electoral Board to serve for five years. (See "Central Electoral Board"). These members actively participated in party campaigns while also serving as election officials. Since these officials owed their jobs to the party leaders, their loyalty to the party superseded their commitment to election preparations. Almost from the beginning of their terms, opposition and Colorado members were divided. The Board rarely met as a group and did not exchange information.

Board members should be selected on their professional merits - not their party membership. Members who do not represent one political party will better focus on the preparation and administration of the elections.

2. *Congress should create an independent electoral court with a clearly defined authority and jurisdiction.*

For the 1991 municipal elections, the electoral court presided over candidate eligibility, complaints of election day irregularities and verification of the election results. Before the 1993 national elections, Congress granted itself the power to review administrative complaints and verify results. (See "Election Court.") Opposition leaders feared that the congress, two thirds of whose members were from the Colorado Party, could not be objective arbitrators and were discouraged from presenting complaints within the system. Because of this belief, opposition leaders reported irregularities to the media. Many allegations were exaggerated and created unnecessary tensions.

The future court should be granted authority as well as defined duties. Once incorporated, these should not be altered. The members of the electoral court should not be representatives of political parties.

3. *Congress should clearly define the duties of the Sectional Electoral Boards.*

Observers noted some confusion about the responsibilities of the Sectional Electoral Board. For instance, while sectional officials diligently prepared for elections in the municipalities, they often neglected the outlying areas in their jurisdiction believing that this was the responsibility of another Sectional Board. Confusion was also apparent in the management of the computer terminals placed in each departmental capital, the release of results from departmental races and the relocation of polling tables. Claiming that the Sectional Electoral Boards were autonomous, the Central Electoral Court provided only minimal assistance to the Sectional Boards and virtually no oversight.

Congress should clearly define the authority of the Sectional Electoral Boards. Once these duties are finalized, the Central Electoral Board should maintain continuous contact with the Sectional Boards.

4. *Congress should modify, or even redraft, the electoral code to reflect a consensus of all the political forces in the country.*

Congress has modified the electoral code several times during the last two years. When proposing modifications, lawmakers seemed to be reacting to developments within the Colorado Party rather than seeking ways to improve the system. The proposal only a few weeks before election day to increase polling officials at each table is a point in case. The sponsors of this proposal admitted to observers that the modifications were an attempt to field more Colorado Party officials than opposition party officials at each of the polling tables. Meanwhile, election officials were forced to delay the distribution of tally sheets until the number of officials was defined.

Now that Congress more accurately reflects the political pluralism of the country, it should modify the current code or draft another altogether. The code should stipulate that modifications cannot be made a certain period before elections.

5. *The Electoral Court should implement a well defined and realistic time frame for challenges and appeals for candidates.*

The submission of the complaints and the appeals process for the candidates did not fit the reality of the election timetable. Decisions regarding candidate eligibility were still pending when ballots were being printed. Election officials arbitrarily removed one candidate's name while his case was still in the appeals process. Although the Board reprinted new ballots to include the candidate at the last moment, the tardiness in arbitrating challenges created confusion on printing of ballots.

Candidates should be provided a fair appeals process in which electoral officials review the complaint lodged. All appeals should be completed before the deadline to print ballots.

B. Oversight and Administration

As this report has noted, the administration of the elections has improved considerably since the national elections of 1989. Election materials were delivered on time and in sufficient quantity; voter registries were printed and distributed to the Sectional Electoral Boards; and, on election day, in most areas where observers were present, voters located their polling sites without difficulty.

Nonetheless, NDI observers noted that many citizens were deeply suspicious in regards to the election preparations. Election officials from the Central Electoral Board exacerbated these suspicions by limiting computer access of the registration list. Providing access would have fostered greater confidence in the process.

The following are suggestions to better integrate these organizations in the election process.

1. *Political parties and nongovernmental organizations should coordinate with election officials on civic education.*

In the weeks before the elections, many registered voters were unsure as to where they would vote. The Central Electoral Board installed computers in each departmental capital to assist voters, but many were not made aware of their existence. Political parties and NGOs did not publicize these computers. (See "Voter Registration.")

Paraguayan NGOs and political parties should coordinate with the Central Electoral Board to implement a comprehensive campaign that explains the registration process and informs citizens how and where to vote.

2. *The Central Electoral Board should make data on past elections available to NGOs.*

Data from past elections would provide a valuable tool to NGOs working in Paraguay. The precision of quick counts can be tested by using results from past elections. The effectiveness of campaigns to increase the participation of women could be quantified by comparing participation rates broken down by gender. (Gender is recorded in the registration process and would be easily compiled.) Election officials were reluctant to provide data to outside organizations.

Access to election data should be made available to NGOs and the public as a whole in a timely manner.

3. *Political parties must be more proactive.*

International observers were dismayed that opposition parties did not always utilize available mechanisms designed to increase the transparency of the process. Opposition parties did not participate in the multiparty commission created by the OAS. Opposition members of the Central Electoral Board were not adequately trained to oversee preparations of elections and list. Parties did not inform their supporters about the Board's voter hotline or computer terminals to check voter information.

International observers do not have the capacity to guarantee that every citizen registers correctly, that every registered voter knows where to vote or even that every citizen is able to vote without problems. Political parties and their supporters have this capacity and should prepare accordingly.

D. The Role of the International Community

Since before the overthrow of Stroessner, the international community has played a crucial role in supporting democracy in Paraguay. When the independent radio station Radio Ñanduti was

closed, the National Endowment for Democracy provided funds for it to reopen and continue its broadcasts. As noted in Chapter 1 of this report, in 1988, NDI worked closely with dissident leaders from both the opposition and Colorado Party to create a nonpartisan organization that would pressure the dictatorship to liberalize the system. In 1993, the election of the first civilian president in over half a century again attracted the attention of the international community. On election day, more than 350 observers representing at least 20 countries were in Paraguay.

The inauguration of a democratically-elected civilian president and a congress including representatives from three parties climaxes a democratic transition in Paraguay. The challenges of consolidation, however, will be as great, if not greater, than those of the last five years. Developments in Peru, Guatemala, Venezuela and Brazil reveal that free elections do not guarantee that democracy will flourish. If democratic institutions do not address the concerns of their constituents, as was the case with most of these countries, democracy is placed in jeopardy. International organizations that have provided crucial assistance to encourage democratic elections should now work with these elected officials to help them meet their responsibilities.

1. *International groups should work with elected officials with little previous experience in governing.*

To avoid the concentration of power in one person, or a small group of people, the 1992 constitution gave authority to different branches of government and different levels of government. Congress has the power to investigate, to censure ministers and impeach the president. Municipal governments assess property values and collect property taxes. A new departmental level of government will coordinate with state and municipal officials to ensure health and education for people living in areas outside of municipal boundaries.

Unlike years past, the officials of these governments are from the areas they govern. Candidates for the Chamber of Deputies must have residency in the departments they seek to represent. Candidates for this chamber are elected from a departmental instead of a national list. Citizens directly elect all municipal and departmental officials.

Decentralizing government and changing the manner in which officials are elected will foster a more responsive government. These officials offer a profound knowledge of their communities' needs and will have the resources to address these needs. Many, however, have never before participated in government. This lack of experience could impede their effectiveness in governing. Furthermore, the new relationship between the levels of government has not been completely defined creating some confusion among officials.

International groups should support programs for the newly-elected government officials. Efforts should also be made to foster dialogue among the levels of government to further define the roles and relationships of the different levels and for the departmental governments.

2. *The international community should assist in fostering open communication between congress and the armed forces.*

During the election process, the military presented, or was perceived to present, an obstacle to a peaceful transition of power. Most political leaders and analysts believe, however, that this fear was perpetuated by a small group of officers and did not represent the consensus of the military as an institution. Communication between civilians and military leaders must be increased to ease the tensions that built up during this period.

These elections mark a the beginning of a new relationship between the civilian government and the armed forces. A civilian is commander-in-chief of the armed forces and congress now approves high-ranking military promotions. Candidates from all parties promised to focus the military on soldiering and curtail its dominating role in the economy. Addressing issues within this new context, and with a congress that comprises a majority of opposition members, will inevitably create tensions between the two sectors. Tensions can be avoided by the international community playing the role of a neutral interlocutor and facilitating the institutionalization of communication between the military and civilian institutions such as congress.

3. *International support for programs should be provided through the nongovernmental sector in Paraguay.*

For the last five years, nongovernmental organizations have played a critical role in national elections in Paraguay. They offered training courses to party members and election officials, conducted voter- and civic-education campaigns and conducting independent vote tabulations.

Political leaders in the country have come to trust the nongovernmental sector to provide nonpartisan and professional programs. Many of these NGOs would provide a neutral forum for government officials from all parties. These officials would be able to openly discuss and seek solutions to the challenges they now face. NGOs should be encouraged to continue their work in strengthening democracy in Paraguay.

E. Conclusions

The 1993 national elections in Paraguay mark the culmination of the democratic transition that began in 1989 with the overthrow of Stroessner. During these four years, citizens have gone to the polls to elect two presidents and congresses, a constituent assembly, mayors, governors and their respective legislators. Given the many years of dictatorship, the political environment has been remarkably free. Political parties and civic groups have organized unencumbered, and the press has covered sensitive issues. Candidates have presented voters with an array of choices.

The elections during the last four years have not always been fair, however. Opposition candidates have not been able to overcome the vast economic advantages of the ruling party. Laws to restrict the use of state resources for political purposes have not been respected. The election

apparatus has been controlled by the ruling Colorado Party and dependent on the government bureaucracy also run by Colorado members. Access for opposition party members has been limited.

Of the three elections that NDI has observed, the 1993 national elections were the best administered and best organized. The NDI/Council delegation noted that "throughout the country, the elections were generally conducted in a peaceful and orderly manner. Particularly in urban areas, the elections were administered properly, in contrast to the 1991 municipal elections when thousands of voters were unable to locate their voting sites on election day." The NDI/Council delegation believes that the outcomes of the elections reflect the collective will of the people of Paraguay.

The new political pluralism that has emerged from these elections presents a number of challenges to Paraguayan democracy. The new president will have to seek support from ruling and opposition members of congress to implement his policies. The delegation urges the president to begin a dialogue with other political parties as soon as possible. The process is not easy, and setbacks can be expected.

The Congress now has new oversight responsibilities regarding such important matters as military appointments. Members of congress must make decisions based on merits and gradually build the confidence of their constituents. These new responsibilities require that members of congress obtain the necessary training and information to make informed decisions.

Perhaps the biggest challenge facing the new government is the role of the military. Actions and threats by the military during the electoral process harmed the hard won confidence of the citizenry. Oviedo's comments that the military and Colorado Party would rule for centuries raised legitimate fears that the outcome of the elections would not be accepted should an opposition candidate had won. As candidate Wasmosy promised during the campaign, the government should work to refocus the role of the armed forces to protect against external aggression and remove itself from economic and political activities.

With the completion of the 1993 national elections, Paraguay has completed perhaps the final step of its transition to democracy. Paraguay now faces the challenge democratic consolidation, a process which -- like the transition -- requires unending dedication and cultivation.

APPENDICES

- I. Press coverage from March NDI trip
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NOTICIAS

Asunción, domingo 28 de marzo de 1993

Delegación de los EEUU vendría para elecciones

Se encuentran en nuestro país algunos miembros del Instituto Nacional Demócrata (IND), quienes están realizando contactos con los principales líderes y candidatos de partidos políticos.

Sally Shelton, miembro de la Junta Directiva del organismo, se mostró muy interesada en conocer detalles del proceso de transición y de las elecciones que se realizarán el 9 de mayo. Al respecto manifestó que

existe la posibilidad de que observadores de los Estados Unidos de América, pertenecientes a esa organización, puedan venir a fiscalizar las votaciones.

Shelton vino acompañada de Gabriel Díaz Berbel, diputado español por el Partido Popular; y de Pedro Gómez de la Fuente, director nacional electoral del Ministerio del Interior de la Argentina. Los mismos indicaron que ya han mantenido reuniones con dirigentes de

varios partidos y movimientos independientes.

Los citados políticos destacaron la importancia del proceso electoral por el que atraviesa nuestro país, agregando que las elecciones generales asegurarán el ingreso definitivo del Paraguay al grupo de las naciones democráticas.

Resaltaron la importancia de estos comicios, comparándolos con los realizados años atrás en países como Chile y Nicaragua.

BEST AVAILABLE COPY

April 27, 1993

Mr. Jimmy Carter
Former President of the United States of America
c/o United States Embassy
Asunción, Paraguay

Dear Mr. President:

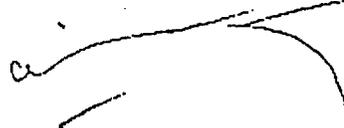
We have the honor of inviting you again to attend the May 9th general elections in Paraguay as an international observer.

These elections represent the most important step towards consolidating democracy in Paraguay. Their fairness and transparency shall legitimate our country's first civilian government in more than fifty years. Numerous high level international observers have already agreed to be present. However, because of your achievements as a champion of world democracy and a symbol in the defense of human rights, you will be the most significant witness of these elections and will strengthen the ties of friendship and common ideals between the people of Paraguay and the United States.

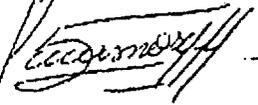
Sincerely yours,



Guillermo Caballero Vargas
Presidential Candidate
Alianza Encuentro
Nacional



Domingo Laino
Presidential Candidate
Partido Liberal Radical
Auténtico



Juan Carlos Wasmosy
Presidential Candidate
Asociación Nacional Repu-
blicana - Partido Colorado

ELECCIONES GENERALES

Diputados Dpto. ITAPUA

PERIODO 1993 - 1998

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MARQUE AQUI

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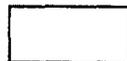
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ELECCIONES GENERALES
PERIODO 1993 - 1998

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Presidente

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ELECCIONES GENERALES

Junta Departamental

Dpto. ITAPUA

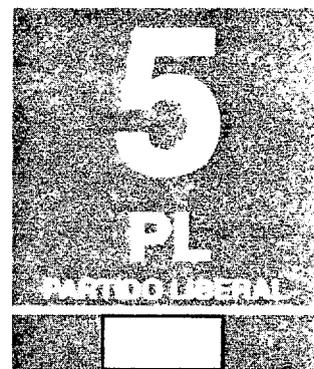
PERIODO 1993 - 1998



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ELECCIONES GENERALES
PERIODO 1993 - 1998

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Presidente

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ELECCIONES GENERALES

Presidente - Vice Presidente

PERIODO 1993 - 1998

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ELECCIONES GENERALES
PERIODO 1993 - 1998

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Vocal

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Presidente

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Vocal

VOTER REGISTRATION CHART

A HECHOS Y DATOS	B OBSERVACIONES - IMPLICACIONES	C OPINIONES DE PARTIDOS Y GRUPOS POLITICOS	D OPINIONES NUESTRAS
<p>Tema A. I. Registro Civil.</p> <p>A. 1. 1. El lista-do de nacimientos, defunciones, migra-ciones, estan dis-puestos en diferen-tes instituciones, son incompletos, a destiempo, con mul-tiples errores.</p>	<p>B. 1. 1. Se dificulta la verificacion de los datos personales.</p>	<p>C. 1. 1. No se percibe como elementos importantes en este momento.</p>	<p>D. 1. 1. Debe disenarse un sistema mas eficiente.</p>
<p>A. 1. 2. No tienen una estructura uni-ficada.</p>	<p>B. 1. 2. Se requieren multi-ples gestiones para constatar informacion.</p>	<p>C. 1. 2. Puede ser un proyecto futuro.</p>	<p>D. 1. 2. Genera muchos conflictos.</p>
<p>Tema A. 2. Cedula-cion.</p> <p>A. 2. 1. La realiza la Policia.</p>	<p>B. 2. 1. Se presta a manipulaciones.</p>	<p>C. 2. 1. Control politico indirecto.</p>	<p>D. 2. 1. Estas funciones debieran pasar al Tribunal Electoral.</p>
<p>A. 2. 2. Se basa muchas veces en datos subjetivos con errores. (Ejemplo: la fecha de nacimiento).</p>	<p>B. 2. 2. Podria incluir menores de edad con fechas diferentes.</p>	<p>C. 2. 2. Personas sin la edad requerida posee cedula y podria ser inscripta en el registro electoral.</p>	<p>D. 2. 2. El sistema existen-te es sumamente ineficiente.</p>

<p>A. 2. 3. Se otorga a quien lo solicite y esto se hace cuando se necesite. Ejemplo: a mayores de edad y/o a menores de edad para la escuela o para viajar al exterior; para poder registrarse para aparecer en el padron electoral y para poder votar, para otras cosas. La cedula expira en 10 anos.</p>	<p>B. 2. 3. Como no es obligatoria, un sector significativo de la poblacion no tiene cedula de identidad.</p> <p>Debe sacarse la nueva cedula con el mismo proceso.</p>	<p>C. 2. 3. Esta condicion de no ser obligatoria, margina a un sector de la poblacion de participar en procesos electorales.</p>	<p>D. 2. 3. El documento de identidad debe ser automatico y de facil consecucion , para que cada habitante tenga acceso a todas las gamas de beneficio social, ademas de sus responsabilidades respectivas.</p>
<p>A. 2. 4. La numeracion es corrida.</p>	<p>B. 2. 4. No tiene relacion con las edades</p>	<p>C. 2. 4. Dificultad establecer relaciones por edad y lugar de procedencia.</p>	
<p>A. 2. 5. Existen personas con dos o varias cedulas de numeracion distinta.</p>			
<p>A. 2. 6. Existen personas distintas con numeros de cedulas iguales.</p>	<p>B. 2. 6. Ello resulta por el uso de un sistema no verificable.</p>	<p>C. 2. 6. Se presenta a manipulaciones de la policia.</p>	<p>D. 2. 6. Se requiere nuevo sistema de cedulacion.</p>
<p>A. 2. 7. A cada numero de cedula corresponde otro numero distinto que es el del prontuario policivo (generalmente) con igual cantidad de cifras.</p>	<p>B. 2. 7. Esta doble numeracion confunde a muchos.</p>	<p>C. 2. 7. A la poblacion se ficha antes de que cometa delito alguno.</p>	<p>D. 2. 7. Un sistema simplificado podria permitir el uso de un numero unico para cada ciudadano que pueda servir para todos los casos.</p>

<p>A. 2. 8. En un tiempo se le dio el mismo número de cédula a los mellizos.</p>	<p>B. 2. 8. Esta práctica parece superada. Sin embargo, se menciona como dato curioso, pero que no es relevante.</p>	<p>C. 2. 8. Fue presentado como parte de los casos que afectan el padrón electoral.</p>	<p>D. 2. 8. Un sistema que asigne a cada ser nacido un número de identidad automático ayudaría a eliminar en su raíz esta anomalía.</p>
<p>Tema A. 3. Datos de Población</p>			
<p>A. 3. 1. En 1992 se realizó un censo nacional cuyas cifras recién están saliendo como "provisorias".</p>	<p>B. 3. 1. Se cuenta ya con información estadística valiosa.</p>	<p>C. 3. 1. Aun no se le usa con fines prácticos.</p>	<p>D. 3. 1. La relación de datos de censo vs. registro electoral ayuda a ver situaciones interesantes.</p>

<p>A. 3. 2. Segun el censo '92, en 1982 eran 3.029.830 habitantes en la Republica de Paraguay En 1992 eran 4.123.550 habitantes en total, de los cuales 2.176.597 habitantes son mayores de 18 anos y mas, o sea en edad para poder votar. Del total de la poblacion 2.084.017 son urbanas y 2.039.533 son rurales.</p> <p>Total de mujeres 2.053.877, Total de hombres 2.069.663.</p> <p>Asi mismo detallamos que urbanas mayores de 18 anos son 1.187.566 y rurales mayores de 18 anos son 992.031.</p> <p>A nivel urbano-hombres: 1.004.203 urbano-mujeres: 1.079.814.</p> <p>A nivel rural-hombres: 1.065.470. rural-mujeres: 974.063.</p>	<p>B. 3. 2. Electoralmente tienen importancia tanto en el campo como en la ciudad. Sin embargo hay un ligero margen en el area urbana en personas de 18 anos y mas (54% - 46%).</p>	<p>C. 3. 2. Tienen organizaciones en todo el pais. Los partidos tradicionales (colorados/liberales) tienen buenas bases en areas rurales. E.N. manifiesta preferencia en areas urbanas.</p>	<p>D. 3. 2. La poblacion de 18 y mas esta significativamente al margen de la importancia de la participacion politica, cuando comparamos 2.176.597 de 18 y mas con los inscriptos en registro electoral (ver D.4.2.)</p>
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<p>Tema A. 4. Padron Electoral A. 4. 1. En el padron aparecen listados 1.699.052 personas. Luego de haber sido depurados por el JEC (Junta Electoral Central).</p> <p>A. 4. 2. La depuracion consistio en</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - eliminar los muetos que aparecian. - eliminar los menores. - eliminar la doble o multiple inscripcion. - eliminar los inexistentes o fantasmas (personas o nombres inventadas por funcionarios en alguna etapa del proceso). - agregar a todos los que no aparecian y fueron reportados por los partidos, grupos, y personas en el periodo legal para eso. - ubicar en lugar correcto de residencia a los que reportaron cambio de residencia. - corregir errores de nombre, numero de cedula, o fecha de nacimiento mal 	<p>B. 4. 1. Es el listado oficial que servira para las elecciones del 9 de Mayo 1993.</p> <p>B. 4. 2. El Presidente del JEC indico que alrededor de 30.000 inscripciones fueron excluidos por diversas razones. Un representante de OEA explico que aun quedan inscripciones que no pudieron eliminarse por falta de documentos que apoyaran dichas exclusiones.</p>	<p>C. 4. 1. Copias del padron han sido recibidos por los partidos.</p> <p>C. 4. 2. E. N. informo que el padron quedaron cerca de 100.000 numeros repetidos (informacion duplicada) y otros 100.000 de mala inscripcion o inscripcion fantasma. Los partidos hicieron 10.000 correcciones en el periodo de "tachas y reclamos" ante la JEC.</p>	<p>D. 4. 1. Este listado aun no esta abultado.</p> <p>D. 4. 2. El saldo de personas reales dentro del padron alcanza a 1.500.000 electores netos. De 2.177.000 de 18 anos y mas quedan al margen de las elecciones 677.000 paraguayos, o sea 31.1%</p>
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<p>fecha de nacimiento para eliminar o mantenerlos.</p>			
<p>A. 4. 3. El padron se hace en base a las inscripciones electorales. Voluntarias.</p>	<p>B. 4. 3. Al no tener cédulas de identificación, no se pueden inscribir en el registro electoral.</p>	<p>C. 4. 3. Los inscriptos en los partidos deben ser registrados en las Juntas Electorales.</p>	<p>D. 4. 3. Los inscriptos en los partidos, no necesariamente aparecen en el padron, ya que son actos separados.</p>
<p>A. 4. 4. El padron electoral informa el sitio en que vota cada persona registrada, es decir el local y la mesa.</p>	<p>B. 4. 4. El vocal puede tener varias mesas.</p>	<p>C. 4. 4. Se quejan de dificultades en ubicar a los inscriptos.</p>	<p>D. 4. 4. Existen quejas verbales y pocas se formalizan.</p>
<p>A. 4. 5. Antes la delimitación del área de residencia para decidir centro y mesa de votación de cada persona estaba dada por "parroquias" y por "compañías"; ahora esta dada por barrios y "compañías".</p>	<p>B. 4. 5. La delimitación de parroquia no corresponde exactamente a la de barrios y esta última es más confusa o desconocida por la población pero esta establecida por el municipio. Ejemplo de un caso en que 7 parroquias anteriores son el equivalente de 65 barrios ahora y hay barrios en límites de parroquias que han sido reclasificados técnicamente pero que difieren de la nomenclatura tradicional.</p>	<p>C. 4. 5. No se hacen publicaciones que ayuden a orientar al electorado.</p>	<p>D. 4. 5. Las delimitaciones técnicas por barrios ayudarán en el futuro a ubicar a los electores según su residencia declarada. Mientras tanto habrá que hacer uso de los sitios que aparecen en el padron, y el éxito dependerá de las organizaciones de apoyo electoral a la población.</p>

<p>A. 5. Inscripcion Electoral</p>			
<p>A. 5. 1. La inscripcion electoral es voluntaria asi como votar es un derecho (no un deber); no es obligatorio.</p>	<p>B. 5. 1. La poblacion no tiene que parti-cipar. Los grupos politicos buscan a los electores.</p>	<p>C. 5. 1. Los grupos politicos han realizado actividades de inscripciones masivas.</p>	<p>D. 5. 1. Debe ser automatica desde que nacen en una sola Institucion.</p>
<p>A. 5. 2. La inscripcion la realizaran los grupos politicos interesados a quienes la junta electoral sectorial correspondiente le entrega y le recibe los pliegos de inscripcion numerados.</p>	<p>B. 5. 2. La inscripcion recoge los vicios y errores de cedulacion y agregan otros errores.</p>	<p>C. 5. 2. Los grupos politicos acusan al gobierno de eliminarles a sus inscriptos detectandolos segun los numeros que les dieron.</p>	<p>D. 5. 2. Este proceso debe estar en manos del Tribunal Electoral junto a cedulacion, certificacion de nacimientos y muertes y las inscripciones para recoger a quien no este ya registrado.</p>
<p>A. 5. 3. Muchos de los documentos de inscripcion, por razones humanas, tienen muchos errores y algunos de esos errores no son detectados a la hora de hacer el padron y otros si, por lo que no son anulados y no aparecen en el padron.</p>	<p>B. 5. 3. Se introducen datos enviados que luego danan el registro electoral de manera inconciente.</p>	<p>C. 5. 3. Las personas no capacitadas y solo interesadas en cobrar inventan nombres y/o datos.</p>	<p>D. 5. 3. Los partidos deben ser mas cuidadosos en la asignacion de suscriptores y su entrenamiento para el trabajo.</p>
<p>A. 5. 4. Las personas inscriptas no guardan el papel que lo comprueba, su copia, por lo que es dificil verificar porque no aparece o porque aparece en otro lugar.</p>	<p>B. 5. 4. Las quejas pueden ser justificadas o no pero no hay forma de comprobarlas.</p>	<p>C. 5. 4. Los partidos confian ciegamente en sus miembros y no creen posible tantos errores. No comprueban y lo atribuyen a fraude del gobierno.</p>	<p>D. 5. 4. Las autoridades, los partidos politicos y los grupos civicos deben educar u orientar a la ciudadania sobre la importancia de este documento.</p>

<p>A. 6. Sistema Electoral</p> <p>A. 6. 1. La Junta Electoral Central - JEC esta compuesta por 9 personas miembros de partidos o grupos politicos, los mas grandes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 6 colorados - 2 liberales - 1 Enc. Nacional. 	<p>B. 6. 1. Se derivan controles sectarios.</p>	<p>C. 6. 1. Los que estan en minoria se quejan.</p>	<p>D. 6. 1. Legalmente favorece a grupos determinados por ley, en detrimento de los otros.</p>
<p>A. 6. 2. El JEC ha entregado a los partidos copias del padron por mesa y local ordenado alfabeticamente por apellido.</p>	<p>B. 6. 2. El local y la mesa esta decidido segun el barrio por lo que es posible que mucha gente ha sido reubicada de centro y mesa pues ya no se usa el criterio de parroquia. Esto ha confundido a muchisima gente.</p>	<p>C. 6. 2. - Algunos partidos temen que el padron final que estara en cada mesa este cambiado o sea diferente al que ya les han entregado.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creen que alteraran nombres o primera letra del apellido y/o numero de cedula para reubicar o anular su posibilidad de votar por diferencia con la cedula o por no encontrarse. 	<p>D. 6. 2. Al no aparecer en una mesa determinada la busqueda se dificulta si no existe un listado completo.</p>
<p>A. 6. 3. El JEC cuenta con _____ terminales telefonicas para que los ciudadanos confirmen si aparecen en el padron y donde votar.</p>	<p>B. 6. 3. A la fecha estan subutilizados.</p>	<p>C. 6. 3. Dicen que cuando los identifican les bloquean o no les atienden las llamadas.</p>	<p>D. 6. 3. Deben usarse con mas intensidad ahora con tiempo.</p>
<p>A. 6. 4. Ahora esta instalando las terminales en los otros estados, una en cada J.E.S. Juntas Electorales Sectoriales.</p>	<p>B. 6. 4. Ayuda a la descentralizacion y mejora del servicio.</p>	<p>C. 6. 4. Recien pueden usarlos. No estan completos.</p>	<p>D. 6. 4.</p>

<p>A. 6. 5. Tan pronto terminen de instalarlos en el interior empezaran a instalarles una terminal a cada partido o grupo politico.</p>	<p>B. 6. 5. Hay limites tecnicos y de recursos humanos. Estan contra el tiempo.</p>	<p>C. 6. 5. Dicen que sera ya muy tarde y que siempre salen nuevas excusas para no instalarsela.</p>	<p>D. 6. 5. Mientras se pueden usar los disponibles.</p>
<p>A. 6. 6. Los partidos o grupos politicos han solicitado al JEC una copia del padron en cinta magnetica y el JEC les ha negado la entrega por razones de seguridad, alegan que para que no lo alteren.</p>	<p>B. 6. 6. El JEC niega la entrega a todos los partidos politicos.</p>	<p>C. 6. 6. Esta negacion de la cinta magnetica del padron genera mas sospechas de fraude electronico.</p>	<p>D. 6. 6. Siendo el partido oficialista mayoria en JEC, se sospecha que la tienen.</p>
<p>A. 6. 7. En ningun lado puede uno ver un padron impreso ni en pantalla ordenado por nombre ni por cedula de toda la poblacion nacional en el padron sin subdividirse por estado, ni centro, ni mesa; uno general</p>	<p>B. 6. 7. Esto demora una verificacion nacional.</p>	<p>C. 6. 7. Se quejan de obstaculizacion electoral y denuncian posibles fraudes.</p>	<p>D. 6. 7. Las inquietudes y desconfianza a la JEC se obviarían con la entrega de ellos.</p>
<p>Tema.7 Estructura de votacion</p> <p>A. 7. 1. Los miembros o autoridades de mesa de votacion son 3; 1 colorado, 1 P. Liberal y 1 escogido por sorteo entre representantes de los demas organizaciones politicas que participan.</p>	<p>B. 7. 1. A pesar de que son 9 grupos, dos de ellos controlan las mesas de votacion.</p>	<p>C. 7. 1. Los grupos politicos distintos a los dos primeros se sienten en desventaja y sospechas de manipulacion del sorteo.</p>	<p>D. 7. 1. El metodo de sorteo total u otro que garantice imparcialidad debiera introducirse. Ahora se presta a manipulacion.</p>

<p>A. 7. 2. Los cargos de presidente y 2 vocales de mesa son asignados por sorteo entre los 3 que quedan en el primer proceso.</p>	<p>B. 7. 2. Por el punto anterior pueden realizarse los sorteos de manera irregular.</p>	<p>C. 7. 2. Los grupos politicos distintos a los dos primeros sienten una gran posibilidad y certeza de manipulacion del sorteo de los cargos.</p>	<p>D. 7. 2. La estructura de conformacion de las mesas esta viciada.</p>
<p>A. 7. 3. El proceso de votacion con 4 o 5 boletas y 200 personas haciendolo se ha calculado que toma 12 horas en cada mesa de votacion.</p>	<p>B. 7. 3. Aunque el tiempo de votacion es menor, las autoridades esperan un porcentaje de abstencion que recoja la diferencia en horas.</p>	<p>C. 7. 3. No hay senal de preocupacion por la demora de dicho proceso.</p>	<p>D. 7. 3. El procedimiento por ley es muy demorado, obliga a escrutinios nocturnos.</p>

**Candidaturas inscriptas ante la junta electoral central
por orden de presentación**

Partido Nacional Socialista

Presidente: Gustavo Bader Ibañez
Vice-Presidente: Luisa Ramona Garcia de Espinola
Diputados: Por Capital
Gobernador: Por el departamento central

Asociación Nacional Republicana

Presidente: Ing. Juan Carlos Wasmosy Montti.
Vice-Presidente: Dr. Angel Roberto Seifart
Senadores: Lista Nacional
Diputados: En todos los Departamentos de la República
Gobernadores: En todos los Departamentos de la República
Juntas Departamentales: En todos los Departamentos de la República

Alianza Encuentro Nacional

Presidente: Dr. Guillermo Caballero Vargas
Vice-Presidente: Maria Victoria Brusquetti
Senadores: Lista Nacional
Diputados: En todos los Departamentos de la República
Gobernadores: En todos los Departamentos de la República
Juntas Departamentales: En todos los Departamentos de la República

Partido de Los Trabajadores

Presidente: Eduardo Maria Arce Schaerer
Vice-Presidente: Arturo Oscar Acosta Mena
Senadores: Lista Nacional
Diputados: En todos los Departamentos de la República
Gobernadores: En los departamentos de San Pedro,
Cordillera, Guaira, Itapua, Alto Parana y
Central.

Movimiento Político " 26 de Mayo "

Diputados: Por Capital

Partido Liberal Radical Auténtico

Presidente: Domingo Laino
Vice-Presidente: Dr. Juan Manuel Benitez Florentin
Senadores: Lista Nacional
Diputados: En todos los Departamentos de la República
Gobernadores: En todos los Departamentos de la República
Juntas Departamentales: En todos los Departamentos de la República

Alianza " Concertación Democrática y Social " P.H. y P.D.C.

Presidente: Ing. Ricardo Canesse
Vice-Presidente: Miguel Angel Montaner
Senadores: Lista Nacional
Diputados: Por Capital, Concepción, San Pedro, Caaguazu, Paraguari, Alto Parana, Central, Amabay, Canindeyu, y Presidente Hayes
Juntas Departamentales: En todos los departamentos de Concepción, San Pedro, Caaguazu, Paraguari, Alto Parana, Central, Amabay, Canindeyu y Presidente Hayes

Movimiento Político Social Progresista

Presidente: Dr. Leandro Prieto Yegros
Vice-Presidente: Esc. Gustavo Adolfo Benitez Soler
Senadores: Lista Nacional
Diputados: Por Capital, San Pedro, Cordillera, Guaira, Caaguazu, Itapua, Paraguari, Alto Parana, Central, Amambay, y Alto Paraguay
Gobernadores: Por Cordillera, Guari, Caazapa, Alto Parana, Amambay, y Alto Paraguay
Juntas Departamentales: Por San Pedro, Cordillera, Guaira, Caazapa, Paraguari, Alto Parana, Central, Amambay, Presidente Hayes y Alto Paraguay

Partido Blanco

Senadores: Lista Nacional
Diputados: Por Capital, Caaguazu, y Central

Movimiento Amplio de Participación Nacional

Presidente: Joel Atilio Cazal
Vice-Presidente: Porfiria Guerrero de Martinez
Senadores: Lista Nacional
Diputados: Por el Departamento de Capital, Central,
San Pedro, Cordillera, Caaguazu,
Canindeyu, y Presidente Hayes
Gobernadores: Por los Departamentos San Pedro y Caaguazu
Junta Departamental: Por el Departamento de Caaguazu

Movimiento Político Regional Unidad Nacional
(Departamento de Alto Parana)

Diputados: Por el Departamento de Alto Parana
Gobernador: Por el Departamento de Alto Parana
Junta Departamental: Por el Departamento de Alto Parana

Movimiento Político Regional Concepción de Todos
(Departamento de Concepción)

Junta Departamental: Por el Departamento de Concepción

Partido Liberal

Presidente: Abraham Zapag Bazas
Vice-Presidente: Domingo Perez Ferraro
Senadores: Lista Nacional
Diputados: Por los Departamentos de Capital,
Caaguazu, Paraguari, Itapua, Alto Parana,
Central y Boquerón
Gobernadores: Por los Departamentos de Itapua,
Paraguari, Itapua, Alto Parana, Central y
Boquerón.
Juntas Departamentales: Por los Departamentos de Caaguazu, Itapua,
Paraguari, Alto Parana, Central y
Boquerón

Movimiento Político Regional Popular Paranaense

Diputados: Por el Departamento de Alto Parana
Gobernador: Por el Departamento de Alto Parana
Junta Departamental: Por el Departamento de Alto Parana

CONFERENCIA EPISCOPAL PARAGUAYA

EQUIPO NACIONAL DE PASTORAL JUVENIL
Aberdi 782 - Teléf. 490-920 - 492-670
Fax: 495-115
Casilla de Correo 1436
Asunción - Paraguay

Ref.: Nº/ 6/93

Asunción, 22 de abril de 1993.-

A los
Equipos diocesanos de Pastoral Juvenil:

Apreciados compañeros:

Nos es sumamente grato contactar de nuevo con ustedes en un tiempo tan especial como la Pascua, cuyo mensaje de alegría, sabemos, nos alienta siempre y nos renueva el entusiasmo que dinamiza el quehacer cotidiano de la P.J.

Precisamente, nuestro compromiso cristiano, nos exige tomar posturas coherentes con acciones y actitudes concretas -como de hecho ya muchos jóvenes lo han demostrado marcando presencia y protagonismo en momentos decisivos en los últimos tiempos.

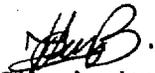
Hoy, una vez más, la situación coyuntural por la que atraviesa nuestro país, nos plantea un gran desafío, que asimismo nos brinda la oportunidad única de inaugurar una nueva etapa histórica, con una participación responsable, sería y consciente. Creemos que así será y sabemos que existen varias maneras de hacerlo.

Muy en particular, el E.N.P.J. apoya la iniciativa de la O.N.G. "SAKA", entidad que viene preparando un comuto paralelo de los comicios generales del próximo 9 de mayo, e invita a todos los jóvenes a colaborar con la misma prestando sus servicios como voluntario.

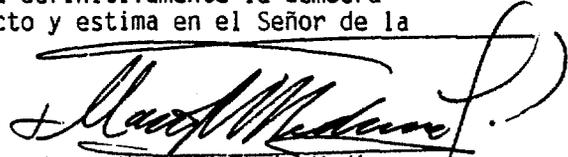
Es bueno recordar la gran tarea que realizó esta organización en algunos municipios en los comicios municipales de 1991, ya que ayudó a la transparencia, garantizando de esa manera el respeto a la voluntad popular. En aquella ocasión, no podemos dejar de mencionar que el trabajo sobresalió gracias al valioso aporte voluntario de los jóvenes.

Teniendo en cuenta esta experiencia y considerando la importancia de realizar esta labor en estas elecciones, creemos que sería muy oportuno colaborar con esta organización. Para ello SAKA cuenta con coordinaciones distritales y departamentales que facilitarán el contacto y la distribución de tareas de los voluntarios.

Esperando una acogida favorable y anhelando ansiosos de que el 9 de mayo triunfe definitivamente la democracia, les saludamos con el mayor afecto y estima en el Señor de la Vida,


Tito A. Jara
Secretario E.N.P.J.




Mons. Mario Melanio Medina
Obispo de Benjamín Aceval
Responsable de Past. Juv.

Saka estará presente en las elecciones

* Ayer se realizó lanzamiento oficial del proyecto, en el Comité de Iglesias

Con el objetivo de adelantar al elector y a los electos, al Gobierno y a la comunidad el resultado del sufragio a nivel nacional con un alto nivel de certeza y completa transparencia, fue lanzado ayer el proyecto Saka, "Iniciativa para la Transparencia Electoral".

El acto se realizó en el local del Comité de Iglesias. La apertura estuvo a cargo del pastor Armin Ilhe, quien se refirió al momento de vivir la historia actual, en alusión a las próximas elecciones generales del 9 de mayo.

"San Pablo dijo una vez: 'Dios no nos ha dado el espíritu del miedo, sino del amor, del coraje y del buen juicio', y por eso yo quiero que Saka, el glasnost paraguayo, que quiere decir la transparencia, acompañe a todos en esta labor en el espíritu del amor, del coraje y del buen juicio; todo para la verdad", remarcó.

En la oportunidad estuvieron presentes el embajador de EE.UU. John Glassman, el Dr. Carlos Mojoli, miembro del Tribunal Electoral de la Capital; Rubén Perina, secretario ejecutivo de la delegación de observadores de la OEA; Patricia Uribe, representante adjunta de Naciones Unidas en el Paraguay, y miembros del directorio de Saka, entre otras personas.

"Basados en una muestra estadística de un 20 por ciento de los locales de votación realizaremos un servicio de conteo rápido que luego de tres horas de haber cerrado los locales de votación determinará cuál de los candidatos a presidente y vicepresidente obtuvo mayor porcentaje de votos", señala una de las metas de Saka.

Asimismo, pretende realizar un cómputo paralelo del 80 por ciento de los votos emitidos en cinco horas, desagregado por candidaturas y departamento. Como antecedente y experiencia, el directorio de Saka indicó el trabajo realizado durante las elecciones municipales de 1991, donde brindó estos servicios y "los mismos fueron muy bien recibidos por la comunidad, que pudo comprobar días más tarde que los datos computados eran exactos y no solamente rápidos".

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Saka lanzó anoche cómputo paralelo

5

Anoche, el organismo no gubernamental denominado Saka, presentó el Proyecto de cómputo paralelo, para las elecciones del 9 de mayo próximo. El acto se llevó a cabo en el local del Comité de Iglesias.

Saka significa en el idioma guaraní "Transparencia" y se constituyó como organización para llevar adelante el emprendimiento, con el objetivo de asegurar la limpieza del proceso electoral de los comicios del próximo mes, buscando la recopilación y difusión de los resultados electorales. Para el efecto, se ha previsto la instalación del sistema de cómputo paralelo de los resultados y de un sistema de conteo rápido que dará las tendencias definitivas a pocas horas de finalizadas las compulsas.

Ese día unos cinco mil mensajeros estarán trabajando para comunicar los primeros resultados. Asimismo, setecientos jefes distritales activarán para transmitir informes a la base, que se encargará de cotejar los resultados, para dar a conocer inmediatamente porcentaje de participación, y, lógicamente, cómo están distribuidos los votos para cada sector político.

Saka está integrado por un grupo de organizaciones no gubernamentales: El Centro para la Cooperación y los Internacionales Culturales, Centro de Estudios Democráticos, Centro de Documentación y Estudios, Centro de Información y Emergencia, Ducidamos, Campaña por la Expresión Ciudadana, y el grupo de Ciencias Sociales, lo mismo que el Equipo Nacional de Laicos.

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SAKÃ

INICIATIVA PARA LA
TRANSPARENCIA ELECTORAL

COMPUTO MUESTRAL

ELECCIONES GENERALES 1993
VOTOS COMPUTADOS PARA
PRESIDENTE DE LA REPUBLICA

HORA 03:35 MARGEN DE ERROR 2.58 %

LISTA	CANDIDATOS	PARTIDO	%
1	Juan Carlos Wasmosy	ANR	40.14%
2	Domingo Laino	PLRA	32.83%
4	Ricardo Canese		0.23%
5	Abraham Zapag	PL	0.08%
7	Eduardo Arce	PI	0.12%
8	Gustavo Bader Ibañez	PNS	0.08%
9	Guillermo Caballero Vargas	EN	24.97%
10	Joel Atilio Cazal	MAPN	0.07%
12	Leandro Prieto Yegros	MSP	0.06%
		Blancos	1.42%
		Nulos	

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2.58

CONTEO MUESTRAL

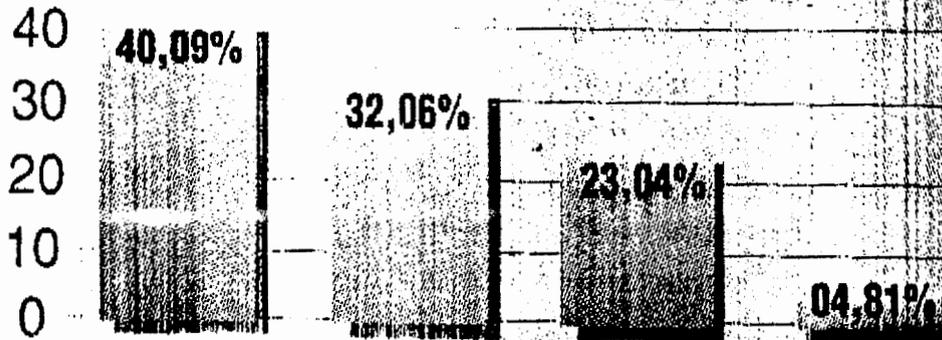
PRECISION:

Infografía: Apple en Paraguay



RESULTADOS DE LA ELECCION PARA PRESIDENTE DE LA REPUBLICA
(Escrutinio de la Junta Electoral Central)

■ PARTIDO COLORADO 473.176 VOTOS	■ PARTIDO LIBERAL RADICAL AUTENTICO 378.353 VOTOS	■ ALIANZA ENCUENTRO NACIONAL 271.905 VOTOS	■ OTROS 8.252 VOTOS
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INFOGRAFIA abc



a Junta Electoral Central entregó ayer resultados del escrutinio provisorio que realizaron en base a los datos que contienen las actas electorales. Los mismos, aunque aún falta la oficialización de parte del Congreso, mantienen la tendencia de los datos extraoficiales. En las presidenciales da como ganador al candidato del Partido Colorado, Juan Carlos Wasmosy, seguido del radical auténtico Domingo Laíno, y mucho más atrás el encuentrista Guillermo Caballero Vargas, tal como se puede

apreciar en el gráfico reproducido más arriba. A la derecha se transcribe la lista de diputados electos por departamento y por partido o movimiento político, siempre en base a los datos provisorios. Se puede observar que el Partido Colorado obtuvo 40 de las 80 bancas en juego en la Cámara de Diputados; el PLRA consiguió 32 y el Encuentro 8, lo que indica que el partido oficialista no tendrá mayoría en esta Cámara. En el Senado la ANR también será minoría, con 20 de las 45 bancas, frente a 17 para el PLRA y 8 para el EN. En cuanto a las gobernaciones, hay una clara mayoría de colorados, aunque es casi seguro de que se repitan las elecciones en algunas localidades y eso haga variar la composición, como los casos de Concepción,

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Council of Freely-Elected
Heads of Government

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Pre-Election Statement

INTERNATIONAL DELEGATION TO NATIONAL ELECTIONS IN PARAGUAY

May 7, 1993
Asunción, Paraguay

I am Al Graham, a senator in the Parliament of Canada. I am pleased to once again co-lead an international observer delegation to elections in Paraguay. The other leaders of this delegation, former U.S. President Jimmy Carter and former Costa Rican President Rodrigo Carazo Odio, will arrive on Saturday.

This delegation is being organized by the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI), a democratic development institute in Washington, D.C. that conducts nonpartisan programs around the world, and the Council of Freely Elected Heads of Government, an informal group of 21 former and current heads of government from throughout the hemisphere, based at the Carter Center of Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia. NDI has organized election observer delegations in more than 20 countries in Europe, Africa, Asia and Latin America, and the Council has observed the electoral process in eight countries in the Americas, four with NDI.

My colleagues on this delegation include former heads of state, legislators, leaders of political parties, election experts and civic leaders. The 31 delegates are nationals from Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Guyana, Honduras, France, Malawi, Mexico, Panama, Peru, Russia, South Africa and the United States.

As many Paraguayans have noted, these elections are significant because they provide the first opportunity for a transition from one elected government to another in the country's history. A successful electoral process will represent an important step toward the consolidation of Paraguay's young democracy.

The delegation is not here to interfere in the internal affairs of Paraguay. We are here to demonstrate international support for the democratic process at the invitation of Paraguayans and to report our impressions to the international community.

As observers, we have taken no position regarding the outcome of the elections. The members of our delegation are here because they have demonstrated in their careers a strong commitment to democracy. We expect to learn a great deal to take home to our respective countries.

Paraguayans from across the political spectrum have welcomed this attention and have expressed appreciation that this and other international observer delegations will be present for the elections. The Paraguayan government itself has encouraged our presence here, and the Central Electoral Board has provided us with credentials.

NDI, which organized observer delegations to the 1989 and 1991 elections, has supported civic education programs in Paraguay during the past four years and recently organized workshops to train local officials. NDI also has provided assistance to SAKA, the consortium of nongovernmental organizations, to conduct a quick count for the election, which will permit an accurate projection of the presidential election results hours after the polls close. NDI also sponsored a visit by two Panamanian experts in voter registration to help the political parties review the registration lists. The experts concluded that although the lists were flawed, the irregularities would not prevent the holding of a legitimate electoral process.

In March, NDI sent a five-person international team to study the electoral process. This week, the institute published a report based on the team's findings and the observations and research conducted by NDI Program Officer Steve Griner, who has been in Paraguay for six weeks. (Copies of the report are available.)

Yesterday and today, the delegation is meeting with a broad spectrum of political leaders, candidates, military officials, civic leaders and members of the Central Electoral Board and Central Electoral Tribunal. Tomorrow, the delegation will divide into six teams and disperse throughout the country. While in the interior, the delegates will meet with candidates and local election officials. On Sunday, the teams will observe the balloting and counting.

The delegation will regroup in Asunción on Monday to exchange impressions. We expect to report our views to the international community on Monday or Tuesday.

While concerns have been raised regarding the electoral process, we are confident that the active monitoring of the process by Paraguayans, supported by us and other international groups, will guarantee the detection of any significant attempt to manipulate the election.

We have been told repeatedly by Paraguayans that fairly conducted elections are in the interest of all Paraguayans. We are grateful for the opportunity to contribute to this laudable goal.

Appendix

Delegation Schedule

International Observer Delegation
Paraguay National Elections
May 6-11, 1993

WEDNESDAY, MAY 5, 1993

Welcome and Registration

Take photographs for credentials

Informal Welcome Dinner

THURSDAY, MAY 6, 1993

8 a.m. Pick-up credentials Central Electoral Board

9 a.m. Welcome and Introduction

Al Graham, Senator, Canada

9:30 a.m. Terms of reference and role of international
observers

Robert Pastor, Executive Secretary, Council of
Freely Elected Heads of Government

Mark Feierstein, NDI Senior Program Officer

10:30 a.m. Political and Electoral Overview

Steven Griner, NDI Program Officer

11 a.m. Dr. Villalba, Vice-Minister of the Interior

11:30 a.m. NDI Technical Assistances

Lourdes Alvarado, NDI Advisor for Voter
Registration Lists

Edgardo Mimica, NDI Advisor for Independent Vote
Count

1 p.m. Lunch

2 p.m. Dr. Miguel Angel Gonzalez Casabianca, Secretary
General and Head of the Cabinet for the
President of the Republic

4 p.m. Nongovernmental Organizations
SAKÃ, Esteban Caballero
Decidamos, Jose Jimenez
Votar es Mejor, Eduardo Bogado

5 p.m. Press and Media
Jose Nicolas Morinigo, *Diaria de Noticias*
Pepa Kostianowsky, *ABC Color*

7 p.m. Central Electoral Board: Opposition party members
Joaquin Cazal, Authentic Radical Liberal Party
Hermes Uliambre, Authentic Radical Liberal Party

7:30 p.m. Dinner

FRIDAY, MAY 7, 1993

8 a.m. Pre-Election Press Conference

9 a.m. Domingo Laino, presidential candidate, Authentic
Radical Liberal Party

10 a.m. Guillermo Caballero Vargas, presidential
candidate, National Encounter

11 a.m. Central Electoral Board: Ruling party member
Rafael Jacobo, Member

Noon Juan C. Wasmosy, presidential candidate, Colorado
Party

1 p.m. Lunch

2 p.m. Deployment Briefing

3 p.m. Carlos Maria Lezcano, military analyst, Social
Sciences Group

5 p.m. Central Electoral Tribunal of Asunci3n
Carlos Moljoli, President
Gladys Lahaje de Leon, Judge

SATURDAY, MAY 8, 1993

Morning Observer teams deploy to interior sites
Afternoon Briefings in interior with political parties and
 election officials

SUNDAY, MAY 9, 1993

A.M. Observe Polling-Site Preparation
A.M./P.M. Observe Polls
P.M. Observe Polls Closing and Ballot Counting

MONDAY, MAY 10, 1993

A.M. Teams return to Asunción
1 p.m. De-Briefing Session and delegation review of draft
 statement.
P.M. Press conference to release NDI/Council Statement
8 p.m. Closing Dinner



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MEMORANDUM

TO: MEMBERS OF SURVEY DELEGATION TO PARAGUAY
FROM: NDI
DATE: April 27, 1993
RE: TERMS OF REFERENCE

We are pleased you will be participating in our program in Paraguay. A briefing report has been prepared for you that outlines some of the pertinent issues that the delegation should examine. In addition to the issues that NDI outlines in the report, below is a list of questions that may help guide you.

I. THE POLITICAL CAMPAIGN

- A. Have there been any restrictions, *de facto* or *de jure*, that have prevented the political parties from conducting their respective campaigns in any region of the country?
- B. Have there been arrests, detentions or killings of party leaders or other individuals during the campaign that appeared politically motivated?
- C. Are citizens free to organize and become politically involved, whatever their political views?
- D. Are voters intimidated into voting for (or not voting for) a particular coalition, party or candidate by the armed forces, political parties or government officials?
- E. Is there any evidence of illegal campaign practices by any of the participants? How did the authorities respond to these charges?
- F. Is there any evidence of government or military support for any of the coalitions, parties or candidates participating in the elections?
- G. Do political parties represent the spectrum of political views of the populace?
- H. Do candidates feel free enough to advocate any position?



75

II. ROLE OF THE PRESS AND MEDIA

- A. Do the competing parties obtain adequate and relatively equal access to the press and media?
- B. Does the government-controlled media provide adequate and balanced coverage of the political campaign?
- C. Do journalists feel free to cover controversial topics? Are certain subjects considered taboo?

III. ADMINISTRATION OF ELECTIONS

- A. Do the electoral tribunal and the local electoral officials act, and are they perceived to act, in a non-partisan manner?
- B. Are there adequate safeguards to prevent widespread fraud in the balloting process? Are voters able to cast a secret ballot?
- C. Is there evidence that prospective voters have been or will be arbitrarily removed from the electoral registry or be assigned to polling sites far from their homes? Are there measures to prevent multiple voting?
- D. Have people been registered that are not eligible to vote, such as under-age Paraguayans and foreigners?

IV. RESULTS

- A. Will political parties have access to the Supreme Electoral Tribunal's counting center?

V. THE ELECTIONS GENERALLY

- A. Do citizens view the elections as a useful mechanism to express their political views?
- B. How is the electoral process contributing to the strengthening of the democratic process in Paraguay?

THE 1993 NATIONAL ELECTIONS IN PARAGUAY
A Pre-Election Report

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 - 2. SAKA
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THE 1993 NATIONAL ELECTIONS IN PARAGUAY A Pre-Elections Report

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report is based upon information gathered by a delegation sponsored by the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) that visited Paraguay from March 28 to 31, 1993 to study the electoral process that will culminate in national elections on May 9, 1993.

The report was written by NDI Program Officer Steven Griner and edited by Senior Associate for Electoral Systems Larry Garber, Senior Program Officer Mark Feierstein and Program Assistant Catherine Kelsch.

The delegation's visit and publication of this report was made possible by a grant from the U.S. Agency for International Development.

I. INTRODUCTION

Paraguay will hold national elections on May 9, 1993. Voters will elect a president, a new Congress and local officials. The elections for president will be the first since 1989, when Gen. Andrés Rodríguez won an overwhelming victory in elections held three months after the overthrow of Gen. Alfredo Stroessner. Paraguayans will elect governors and council members at the departmental level for the first time.

These elections will provide the first opportunity for a transition from one democratically elected government to another. A successful electoral process would represent an important step toward the consolidation of Paraguay's nascent democracy.

These will be the third elections since 1989. Municipal elections were held in 1991, followed by elections that same year for a constituent assembly charged with drafting a new constitution. Although the municipal elections were marred by administrative irregularities, these problems were less evident during the constituent assembly elections.

As the administration of the elections has improved in the last four years, so too has the political environment. Candidates have freely debated issues. Opposition parties have effectively organized. Journalists have vigorously covered stories about government corruption and past human rights abuses. President Rodríguez has vowed to turn over power to a freely elected civilian president.

Nevertheless, pre-election developments have created concern about the general elections. The widespread belief that the Colorado Party primaries were fraudulent and the overt support of the military for the winner, Juan C. Wasmosy, caused many to question the Colorado

Party's commitment to democracy. Opposition parties also fear that electoral authorities will tamper with the voter registration lists to favor Colorado candidates.

Concerns about the elections prompted political leaders in Paraguay to request NDI assistance. NDI is well-known in Paraguay for its support of the democratic process during the last four years. NDI organized observer delegations to the 1989 presidential and 1991 municipal elections. The institute has also supported a civic group, the Center for Democratic Studies, to carry out civic education programs and has organized seminars to train mayors and members of the city council.

From March 28 to 31, 1993, NDI sent a five-member delegation to Paraguay to investigate the possibility of sending an international delegation to observe the May 9 elections. The delegation included: former Ambassador Sally Shelton, a member of NDI's board of directors; Gabriel Diez Berbel, a member of parliament from Spain; Pedro Antonio Gomez de La Fuente, the director of the Argentine National Electoral Commission; NDI Senior Program Officer Mark Feierstein; and Program Officer Steve Griner.

The delegation met with the major presidential candidates, members of the election commission, civic organizers, journalists, the military and the church. In addition to meetings in Asunción, the group traveled to two cities in the interior and spoke with local election officials and candidates. [See Appendix I for agenda.]

This report discusses factors that have set the stage for, and may affect, the May 9, 1993 elections. It begins with a brief geographical, economic and historical overview. It then discusses the electoral framework and the principal actors in the electoral process. A discussion of the electoral environment follows. The report concludes with comments on the electoral process.

II. GEOGRAPHY, DEMOGRAPHY, AND THE ECONOMY

Paraguay is a land-locked, semi-tropical country bordered by Bolivia to the north, Brazil to the east and Argentina to the south and west. The country takes its name from the river that divides the fertile grasslands of the east from the drier Chaco region of the west. Slightly smaller than the U.S. state of California, Paraguay has a population of about 4.5 million. With a land mass of 157,047 square miles, it is one of the least densely populated countries in the world. Paraguay is divided into 16 departments and 206 municipalities.

The population is 95 percent *mestizo*, mainly of Spanish and Indian origin. The Indian population is comprised of 17 ethnic groups. Indians compose 1 to 3 percent of the population and are the poorest sector of Paraguayan society. Recent immigration has brought settlers from all parts of the world.

The extremely arid Chaco region, which borders Bolivia, contains approximately 60 percent of Paraguay's land, but only about 2 percent of the population. The remainder of the population lives east of the Paraguay River.

Paraguay is one of the few bilingual countries in the Western Hemisphere and the only country in the region where an aboriginal language, Guaraní, is spoken more widely than a European one. Most business is conducted in Spanish, but 90 percent of the population speaks Guaraní. The Paraguayan constitution recognizes both as official languages.

Paraguay is a conservative, male-dominated society; women did not gain the right to vote until 1963. About 96 percent of the population is Roman Catholic, although the Church is politically weaker in Paraguay than in most Latin American countries.

The country's land distribution is among the most uneven in Latin America. More than 80 percent of the property is owned by 1 percent of the population. Cattle-raising, agriculture and forestry form the basis of Paraguay's economy. Cotton, timber, soybeans and vegetable oils are the main exports. Paraguay has almost no known mineral resources, but the country is expected to become one of the world's leading exporters of electricity within the near future, a result of the massive Itaipú Dam constructed jointly by Paraguay and Brazil.

III. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A. *Early Paraguayan History*

Long before 1811, when Paraguay became South America's first independent country, Spanish explorers realized that Paraguay was not an area abundant in gold or silver. Earning a living in Paraguay required attention to the land and a close relationship with the Indian population.

Spaniards established their roots by learning the Guaraní dialect and marrying Guaraní women. In one generation, the *mestizo* children outnumbered their Spanish fathers and formed a new ruling class in Paraguay. By the 1800s, the bilingual *mestizos* outnumbered the Guaraní.

Since achieving independence, Paraguay has been ruled by a series of dictators, beginning with José Gaspar Rodríguez de Francia, who dominated the politics of the country from its independence in 1811 until his death in 1840. During Francia's rule, Paraguay was sealed off from the rest of the world, and the country developed little economically and politically. Francia's successor, Carlos Antonio López, opened the country to international trade but retained the authoritarian style of Francia.

López was succeeded by his son, Francisco Solano López, in 1862. Despite having led the nation into a genocidal war against an alliance of Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay (the Triple Alliance) in 1864, Solano López remains the national hero of Paraguay. By the time he died in battle in 1870, more than 90 percent of Paraguayan males had met a similar fate. Only 28,000 males, many of whom were old men and young boys, survived the war. From the ashes of the Triple Alliance War emerged a new political system consisting of two groups, the Colorados and the Azules, the latter also known as the Liberals.

B. The Early 1900s

Unlike the war against the Triple Alliance, the Chaco War against Bolivia from 1932-1935 restored national pride to Paraguay. As Bolivia slowly encroached in the Chaco region seeking eventual annexation of all the territory up to the Paraguay River, national indignation increased. After three years of bloody fighting, the Paraguayans emerged victorious. After the war, the Liberal government was overthrown, and the Febreristas, a reform movement, assumed power.

The Febreristas were overthrown in 1937. From 1937-1954, Paraguay underwent a period of repressive military rule during which all political parties were influenced to some degree by fascism. This period culminated in a civil war in 1947, which plunged the country into chaos. Alfredo Stroessner was one of the few officers who remained loyal to the incumbent regime, and with the help of a few poor and under-equipped peasant militias, he defended Asunción and defeated the rebels within eight months of the start of the war.

C. Stroessner Era

Stroessner came to power in 1954 after a seven-year period of coups and counter-coups within the divided Colorado Party. By purging leaders of the opposition and co-opting their supporters, Stroessner guaranteed the longevity of his regime. The official Colorado Party became inextricably linked with the bureaucracy and the judiciary; resistance to the government was viewed as destabilizing an otherwise harmonious system.

Stroessner indoctrinated the populace by adorning schools, highways and cities throughout the country with his name. Stability was maintained by the unwavering loyalty of the army and the Colorado Party. Through repression and corruption, Stroessner dominated Paraguayan society for more than three decades.

During this period, Paraguay gained notoriety for harboring Nazis and exiled dictators. The most famous of these were Joseph Mengele, the Auschwitz concentration camp doctor known as the "Angel of Death," and Anastasio Somoza, the Nicaraguan dictator overthrown in 1979.

The Paraguayan economy prospered under Stroessner, particularly between 1975 and 1981. An economic boom in the late 1970s was driven by the joint Paraguay-Brazil construction of the world's largest hydroelectric plant in Itaipú, Paraguay. The electricity from this plant easily exceeds the needs of Paraguay, and the excess is sold to Brazil for around \$200 million a year. During its six-year construction period, the thousands of jobs provided to poor farmers in the area, coupled with the rise in land values and commodity prices, guaranteed prosperity for the rural population of Paraguay. Contraband also added to the fortunes of the country, although most of the wealth remained at the top with Stroessner and his lieutenants.

D. Fall of Stroessner

By 1987, economic conditions deteriorated as did Stroessner's health, and his control ebbed. The staunch loyalists of the Colorado Party were challenged by the emergence of factions that opposed Stroessner's personalist rule. While the supporters of Stroessner prevailed in the 1987 Colorado Party convention and nominated their candidate for another five-year term, cracks in the regime were evident.

At the same time, the fractious opposition began working more closely together. The National Accord, formed in 1979 by four leading opposition parties -- the Authentic Radical Liberal Party (PLRA), the Revolutionary Febrerista Party, the Christian Democrats and the Popular Colorado Movement (MOPOCO), a Colorado dissident faction -- organized to challenge Stroessner.

As internal strife grew within the Colorado Party, resentment developed in the armed forces over compulsory retirements. The retirements were reportedly designed so that Stroessner's younger son, an air force colonel, could swiftly rise in the ranks and be groomed to succeed his father. In an attempt to remove another opponent to his succession plans, Stroessner tried to reassign Gen. Andrés Rodríguez, the commander of the prestigious First Army Corps, as defense minister where he would have no direct control over any troops. Although opposed to the Stroessner succession ploy, Rodríguez, father-in-law to Stroessner's eldest son, had previously been a longstanding supporter of the dictator.

Rodríguez refused to relinquish his command of the First Army Corps, and on February 2, 1989, he led a coup against Stroessner. The ensuing battle lasted a few hours with 40 to 50 casualties. Stroessner surrendered on the morning of February 3, and soon thereafter left for exile in Brazil.

E. 1989 Elections

Paraguay has experienced significant democratic gains since Stroessner's fall. Days after the coup, a large number of Stroessner functionaries were either in prison or in exile. Three months later, on May 1, presidential and congressional elections were held.

International observers witnessed serious irregularities in the balloting process, but concluded that the irregularities did not affect the final outcome. Rodríguez won the election by a margin of 54 percent. Observers did note, however, that the short time between the coup and elections did not provide opposition parties with sufficient time to organize or campaign. [See NDI's *The 1989 Paraguayan Elections: A Foundation for Democratic Change.*]

Since taking power, Rodríguez has promised to hand over the presidency to a democratically-elected civilian president. During the first years of the transition, critics doubted the sincerity of Rodríguez's rhetoric, pointing out that the president had been a close associate of Stroessner until nearly the day of the coup. The doubts seemed justified when many Colorado party members urged Rodríguez to consider running for re-election and the president neither

encouraged or discouraged the entreaties. The idea of re-election was ruled out when the constituent assembly retroactively prohibited the re-election of the president.

F. Municipal Elections

In the 1991 municipal elections, the Colorado party won nearly 75 percent of the mayoral races in the country. Nevertheless, the opposition parties and independent movements made considerable electoral gains, the largest being the victory of independent candidate Carlos Filizzola of the Asunción Para Todos (APT) Movement in Asunción. Many city councils, including that of Asunción, are now divided between the Colorados and the opposition (including independents, the Febreristas and the PLRA). Because of opposition mayoral victories in heavily populated areas, such as Asunción and the outlying areas, the majority of Paraguayans are now governed by a mayor from an opposition party.

Shortcomings existed in the administrative preparations for the municipal elections. These were most evident on election day, which was marked by confusion, if not chaos, in many areas. Before election day, elections were suspended in 14 municipalities because voting lists or materials did not arrive in time or did not arrive at all. Problems on election day caused 15 more elections to be postponed. These elections were conducted one month later with OAS observers present. International observers concluded that the problems on election day were due more to a lack of administrative experience than to political malfeasance. (See NDI's *Voting for Greater Pluralism: The May 26, 1991 Municipal Elections in Paraguay*.)

Official results were not released until a month after the elections. This made opposition leaders worry that the victory in Asunción would not be recognized by the government. President Rodríguez acknowledged Filizzola's victory, however, after the timely release of results by SAKA, the nongovernmental consortium, that conducted a parallel vote count.

G. The 1992 Constitution

A 193-member constituent assembly was elected in December 1991. International observers from the OAS noticed considerable improvement in the administration of the constituent assembly elections.

About 55 percent of the Assembly members were from the Colorado Party, 30 percent from the PLRA, 15 percent from the independent Constitución Para Todos Movement, one Febrerista and one Christian Democrat. This assembly promulgated a new constitution in July 1992, after which the assembly was dissolved.

The new constitution decentralizes government by giving new powers and responsibilities to the municipalities and creating a departmental level of government, comparable to the U.S. state government level. It retroactively prohibits the re-election of the president, and requires professional associations, unions, and political parties to elect their leaders by a direct vote.

Political leaders from all parties praise the constitution for providing for an effective balance of power among the different branches of government. For instance, the congress now has the power to investigate government misconduct, censure ministers and impeach the president. Unlike years past, the president cannot dissolve congress.

IV. ELECTORAL FRAMEWORK

A. Overview

Voters will cast five separate ballots in the May 9, 1993 election: one for president and vice president; a national party list of senators; a departmental party list of deputies; governor of the department; and members of the departmental council. Voters from Asunción will only cast three ballots because Asunción is not considered a separate department. Each of these officials will serve a five-year term.

The president and governors are elected by a simple majority. The senators, deputies and members of the departmental councils are elected by proportional representation. For these offices, voters cast their ballots for a specific party's list of candidates. The number of officials from any one party who will serve in office depends on the percentage of the vote that party's list receives. The Senate is composed of 45 members. The Chamber of Deputies has 80 members representing the 16 departments and the capital Asunción. Population determines the number of deputies from each department.

The new constitution decentralizes government by creating directly elected departmental governments, a governor and a departmental council, in each of the 16 departments. In an effort to give the departments more input on the national level, each department is required to field its own candidates for the Chamber of Deputies. The deputies then serve on the national level representing their specific department. On May 9, only the Colorado Party, the Authentic Radical Liberal Party (PLRA) and the new Encuentro Nacional movement will field candidates in every departmental race.

There are two other key provisions to the new constitution. The most contentious involves an absolute prohibition on an individual serving more than one term as president. Most assembly members agreed to the prohibition of re-election, but heatedly debated whether the ban should include President Rodríguez. A conservative faction of the Colorado Party opposed to Rodríguez and members from the opposition parties created an unprecedented alliance and outvoted the Rodríguez-led supporters to retroactively prohibit the re-election of a president.

Another provision requires that professional associations, unions and political parties elect their members by a direct vote. Constituent assembly members vigorously debated this issue. Colorado Party members, whose members represent a large portion of the rank and file of these organization, supported the direct election. The opposition parties questioned the practicality of directly electing leaders in all organizations.

B. Administrative Electoral Bodies

1. Central Electoral Board

The Central Electoral Board (Junta Electoral Central or JEC) is composed of nine members and administers the general elections. The majority party in Congress nominates six members and the remaining seats are distributed among the other parties represented in Congress. The current board is made up of six Colorado Party members, two members of the PLRA and one Febrerista. The JEC depends on the Ministry of Interior for its funding, but is administratively autonomous.

2. Sectional Electoral Board

Subsidiary to the Central Board are 246 sectional electoral boards (juntas electorales seccionales or JESs). Each district has a sectional board, which has six members, four from the Colorado Party, one Febrerista and one PLRA member. One of the members, who is selected by a majority vote from the other members, serves as president. The responsibilities of the sectional board include maintaining voter registration lists, designating polling sites, ensuring the availability of materials at polling sites, resolving challenges that arise before and on election day, and collecting tally sheets from the voting precincts.

3. Electoral Tribunal

An electoral court (tribunal electoral) serves in every judicial district in the country. There are eight electoral courts: a central tribunal (Tribunal Electoral Central) in Asunción and seven in the interior. Each electoral court has at least two members who are nominated by the president and approved by a board made up of the deans of the National and Catholic universities and representatives from the political parties in the National Assembly. The tribunals are responsible for ruling on complaints such as the eligibility of candidates and interpreting the electoral code.

C. Voter Registration

During the NDI visit in March 1993, opposition party leaders urged international observers to pay particular attention to the registration list. The party leaders feared that opposition supporters would be deleted from the lists or assigned to polling sites far from their homes.

A census conducted in 1992 showed 2.2 million people 18 years of age or older. A registration period from August to October 1992 allowed new voters to register, and a two-week period of claims and objections followed. Many eligible voters, however, do not have identification cards and were thus unable to register. One month before election day, the JEC released a list containing 1.7 million names.

The JEC provided a copy of the list to each of the political parties. Leaders requested

the JEC to provide computer disks of the voter registry to permit more rapid verification of the lists. The JEC refused on the ground that the law required only provision of a hard copy of the list. However, in an attempt to appease the parties, the JEC installed computer terminals in the 16 departmental capitals and provided the parties with on-line capabilities to the system. The computer terminals only allow for a name-by-name check, limiting the utility for the parties.

Opposition parties admit they have been unable to take full advantage of the claims-and-objections periods for checking voter information. For instance, in the last claims-and-objections period in October 1992 parties registered only 10,000 complaints from a voter registry of 1.7 million names. This inability to conduct a comprehensive check stems partly from a lack of computerized data and partly from the fact that parties have been busy in a number of campaigns and elections. Besides the three general elections, parties have held internal elections for candidates and party officers. Seven elections in a five-year span have stretched the time and resources of the parties.

Upon completing an initial review of the lists, political parties claimed massive fraud. The PLRA, for example, reported that 52 percent of its supporters had been assigned to a new voting site, which, according to the JEC, is in most cases close to the original site. Encuentro Nacional said that between 50,000 and 60,000 fake names are on the registry. The parties did not provide any documentation to explain how they arrived at these figures. The Encuentro Nacional and the PLRA have repeated to the JEC, press and international observers that under no circumstances should the elections be suspended because of these irregularities.

In April, NDI retained two Panamanian voter registry experts to review the political parties' procedures for checking the registration list. The NDI experts and other observers agree that the list is flawed in large part because of the bureaucracy on which the list depends. For example, the JEC cannot remove any deceased person from the list until a death certificate is received from the national registry, a government agency plagued with inefficiency. Also, many citizens who lose their identification cards are issued new cards and new numbers facilitating double registration. Finally, there is no minimum age for obtaining an identification card, enabling many minors to unlawfully register to vote.

D. Balloting Process

There will be about 9,000 voting tables, with each table servicing no more than 200 voters. Most municipalities locate all of the voting tables at a few central sites.

At the polling table, elections are administered by a three-member board comprised of a president (or *vocal*) and two other electoral officials. In order to qualify as an electoral official, a citizen must be literate and registered in the voting district in which he or she is to serve as an official. A candidate cannot be an electoral official. The electoral code was modified in March to stipulate that the board be composed of two appointed members, one by the Colorado Party and the other by the PLRA, and one member selected by lottery from a pool of candidates from the remaining parties. No site can open until all three officials or the alternates are present. If the officials are not present, the members of the JES are to open the

polling site and oversee the voting.

Before the polls open, electoral officials set up the voting table and place voter information signs in visible locations. When the polls open, the electoral officials sign a blank copy of an *acta*, an official document on which the results of the polling table and the observations of the electoral officials and parties are recorded.

The electoral code permits each political party to have one pollwatcher at each polling table and an unspecified number of supervisors (*apoderados*) at the polling sites. A recent change in the electoral code makes the electoral boards solely responsible for the accreditation of poll workers. Previously, a notary republic could also accredit polling officials, pollwatchers and *apoderados*. The sponsors of the law, Colorado Party members, claim the modifications are an attempt to safeguard against voter fraud. Opposition members counter that the modifications will impede the selection of polling officials and pollwatchers.

The polls open at 7 a.m. The alphabetical voter registry at each polling area contains the first and last names of the voter and his or her address and national identification number. The voter presents his or her identification card, without which he or she cannot vote, to the electoral officials who compare the information to the registry. If there is only one error (such as the first and last name reversed), the voter is still allowed to vote. However, if two or more errors appear on the registration list, the voter is turned away. If a person is permitted to vote, an electoral official signs the registry beside the voter's name in a duplicate registration book.

Once the voter is approved by the election officials, he or she is given five separate ballots (or, as noted above, three in Asunción). The voter is then directed to a curtained booth. The ballots for president and vice president and governor contain the pictures of the candidates and the parties' names and colors. The ballots for senate, departmental deputy and departmental council contain only the parties' names and colors. Behind the curtain, the voter marks his or her preferences on the ballots, folds the ballots, returns to the table at which the electoral officials are seated and deposits all the ballots in the transparent box located there. The voter's identification card is then stamped by the president of the polling table, and the voter's finger is marked with indelible ink to discourage duplicate voting.

The polls are scheduled to close at 5 p.m. Voters still in line at the time, however, are permitted to vote.

F. Counting Process

After the polls close, the president of the polling site counts the names on the list of those who voted and records this number on the registry. The pollwatchers and officials also sign the registry.

When the names of those who voted are verified from the registry, the president, with the help of other officials, opens the ballots and places them in stacks, according to party. Each stack is counted by election officials at the table in the presence of party pollwatchers and

anyone else who wishes to observe. The results and any comments and objections from pollwatchers are recorded on the *acta*. Each party pollwatcher receives an official *acta* on which to mark the results.

When the count is completed, the electoral officials and the party pollwatchers sign the *actas*. The *actas* note any abnormalities witnessed by the electoral officials or the pollwatchers, the number of nullified and blank ballots, and any discrepancy between the number of ballots in the box and the number of people who voted according to the registry. If the number of marked ballots in the box exceeds the number of people who voted according to the official list, the president removes at random and destroys the excess number of ballots from the box. If the number of ballots cast, however, exceeds by 10 percent the number of people voting according to the list, all of the ballots from the polling table will be nullified.

One copy of the official *acta* is transported to the JES in the voting district along with the ballots and ballot boxes. The *actas* are tabulated at the 246 local boards, which in turn report the results to the JEC.

The JEC estimates that results will be released within a couple days of the May 9 elections. They had estimated such a time frame for the release of the municipal elections results in 1991, but these results were not released until almost a month after election day.

V. ACTORS IN THE POLITICAL PROCESS

A. Political Parties

There are nine candidates for president and eight national lists for senator, although only three parties are expected to seriously contend.

1. **National Republican Association - Colorado Party (*Asociación Nacional Republicana - Partido Colorado - ANR*)**. Founded 1887.

Presidential Candidate: Juan C. Wasmosy
Vice Presidential Candidate: Angel Seifart

During the 34-year Stroessner era, the Colorado Party retained its cohesiveness, often by brutal means. This unity dissolved as the question of succession emerged. The fissures in the party deepened in the years after the coup and culminated in the divisive December 27, 1992 Colorado primaries. Most analysts expect the party to rally to the support of its congressional and state candidates for the May 9 elections. But the support of the presidential team is not guaranteed.

Wasmosy was a leading member of a consortium that held lucrative contracts with the Itaipú Dam project sponsored during the Stroessner regime. Seifart is a former minister of education under President Rodríguez. This presidential team has the support of President Rodríguez.

Despite winning the nomination under questionable circumstances, the Wasmosy-Seifart team is considered to represent the more democratic faction of the Colorado Party. [See "Party Primaries," section IV.A].

2. Authentic Radical Liberal Party (*Partido Liberal Radical Auténtico-PLRA*).

Presidential Candidate: Domingo Laíno
Vice Presidential Candidate: Juan Manuel Benitez Florentin

The PLRA is best known for its charismatic and courageous leader, Domingo Laíno, who was a vocal critic of Stroessner and suffered numerous arrests and exile. Despite limited resources and organization, Laíno garnered 20 percent of the vote in the 1989 presidential election, runner-up to Colorado candidate Andrés Rodríguez.

The PLRA, affiliated with the Liberal International, is the largest opposition party in Paraguay, but not nearly as well-organized or funded as the Colorado Party. After 37 years underground, the PLRA was only given a few months to organize for the 1989 presidential election. Two years later, in the 1991 municipal elections, the PLRA won in the large urban areas and had at least one PLRA pollwatcher present at each polling station.

3. National Encounter (*Encuentro Nacional - EN*)

Presidential Candidate: Guillermo Caballero Vargas
Vice Presidential Candidate: María Victoria Brusqueti

Guillermo Caballero Vargas created this independent movement as an alternative to the traditional Liberal and Colorado Parties in Paraguay. Originally, the EN was conceived as an opposition alliance that was to include the PLRA, the Febreristas and other independent movements. But before the alliance could be negotiated, the PLRA and the EN fielded separate candidates and began to campaign independently. The EN did obtain the support of the Asunción Para Todos Movement and a faction of the Febrerista Party, the traditional third party in Paraguay. The popularity of Caballero Vargas grew through 1992 as many disaffected Colorado party members joined the ranks of the EN.

Initially, Caballero Vargas invested a great deal of money in the movement giving it the ability to organize throughout the country. As Encuentro grew in popularity, the movement won the financial support of many citizens and relied less on its main benefactor, Caballero. EN's vice presidential candidate, Maria Victoria Brusqueti, formerly the leader of the lay workers of the Catholic church, is the first women candidate for the vice presidency.

4. Other Independent Movements

Several independent movements have registered candidates, some solely on a regional level and others nationwide. The presidential candidates are Ricardo Canese, who broke with the APT when it joined forces with the Encuentro Nacional and is running under the Social and

Democratic Group (CDS); Leandro Prieto Yegros, an ex-Colorado member representing the Social Progressive Movement; Eduardo María Arce Schaerer of the Workers' Party; Gustavo Bader Ibañez of the Nationalist Socialist Party; Joel Atilio Casal of the National Movement of Ample Participation; and Abraham Zapag Bazas of the Liberal Party. The movements fielding candidates solely on a regional level include: the White Party, United National Regional Political Movement, Political Regional Conception of All Movement and Popular Paranese Political Regional Movement.

B. Military

The armed forces have played a critical role in the democratic transition in Paraguay. They ensured order, but did not interfere in the past three elections and have generally respected the human rights of Paraguayan citizens during the last four years.

Involvement in partisan politics remains the most contentious issue concerning the military. The constitution forbids the involvement of military officials in partisan politics. Nevertheless, high-ranking military officers, led by army commander Lino Oviedo, actively campaigned for Wasmosy during the Colorado primaries. They feared that a victory by Argaña would lead to repercussions for their participation in the 1989 military coup. During the primary campaign, Argaña vigorously criticized the military for corruption during the last five years. He also criticized the leaders of the coup and promised to return political power to the Colorado Party.

Military analysts in Paraguay characterized Oviedo as the "de facto campaign manager" for Wasmosy. Oviedo openly supported Wasmosy and warned of the consequences should Argaña win. To avoid the latter, he utilized military resources to mobilize and transport Wasmosy supporters to the polls. At his behest, several officers threatened military intervention when it appeared that Argaña had won. Military and political analysts say that a coup would have been inevitable if Argaña had eventually been victorious.

One military analyst told the NDI delegation in March that support for Wasmosy was not necessarily manifest throughout the rank and file. Despite the best intentions of Oviedo in the primaries, for instance, many middle-ranking officers did not provide the necessary logistical support to mobilize and transport Wasmosy supporters to the polls. Many soldiers drafted from rural villages that support traditional Colorado Party policies are believed to have voted for Argaña.

The military leadership does not seem to fear the opposition opponents as much as they did Argaña. Of the three presidential candidates, Laíno probably presents the greatest threat. Liberals are the traditional enemies of the military. In an attempt to allay worries about a PLRA administration, Laíno called for a civil-military dialogue between the presidential candidates and the commanders of the armed forces. President Rodríguez rejected Laíno's proposal as unnecessary. Laíno continues to try to assure the military by promising "dialogue and political consensus in deterring the role of the armed forces".

Most analysts agree that the military would accept the leadership of Caballero Vargas as commander-in-chief. His Encuentro Nacional movement includes a number of former Colorado Party members and independent conservatives who are sympathetic to the needs of the military. Although not a member of the Colorado Party, Caballero Vargas has been part of the Paraguayan establishment for many years. As a successful businessman during the Stroessner years, he developed close relationships with military officers who were, and still are, key industry leaders in the country.

Since 1989, the armed forces have dealt with state-sponsored human rights abuses in a forthright manner. In December, government officials discovered "files of terror" in the police headquarters, detailing human rights abuses during the Stroessner regime. The files included lists of victims, dossiers of opposition leaders and even cassette tapes of torture sessions. Documents also revealed cooperation among the dictatorships of Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay in extraditing political prisoners during the 1980s. Upon the discovery of these files, President Rodríguez called for a full investigation, which led to life sentences for the former chief of investigation of the police and three other former members of the national intelligence agency.

The armed forces, however, have not been as forthright with internal allegations of corruption. In December, Col. Luis Gonzalez Rojas provided evidence that implicated the military in the trafficking stolen vehicles from Brazil for sale in Bolivia. When Gonzalez publicized his allegations, he was arrested on charges of disobeying the chain of command and taken to an undisclosed location. Only under intense pressure from Rojas' lawyers, the press and U.S. Ambassador Jonathan Glassman did the police finally reveal the location of its prisoner. Gonzalez Rojas served a 90-day sentence and was released. Three generals are now on trial.

Wasmosy remains the favorite among high-ranking military officers. If elected, Wasmosy would allow the military to retain its autonomy in formulating and spending its budget and would keep the troop size the same.

The military remains involved in the Paraguayan economy and promises to be a major obstacle to privatization efforts undertaken by the next government. Since the Stroessner years, the military has been intimately involved in the economy, both legal and illicit. Military officers have managed key industries such as airlines and the telephone company and have long been suspected of trafficking contraband such as stolen vehicles and drugs.

While all candidates advocate reducing the government budget to complement economic restructuring, cutting the military budget would be problematic. The defense budget, which constitutes an estimated 20 percent of the national budget, is formulated apart from any congressional or presidential oversight. Altering this autonomous budget arrangement and the lucrative markets controlled by the military remain formidable challenges.

C. Church

Before 1989, the Catholic Church played a crucial role in supporting and providing a safe

haven to opponents of the dictatorship. As the democratic process has opened, these individuals have been able to create political parties, professional associations and civic organizations without fear of reprisal.

The Catholic Church will be playing a peripheral role in the electoral process. Some dioceses, for example, will support unofficial pollwatchers at the polling sites to provide assistance to voters. The Church has also recruited youth to participate in a quick count to be conducted by a consortium of civic groups, SAKA. [See section E,2]

Although the Catholic Church remains the most influential church in the country, the Protestant movement has won many converts. Protestant churches have also been active in supporting the democratic process in Paraguay. The Committee of Churches for Emergency Aid (CIPAE) was founded in 1976 to address human rights violations in the country. (The Catholic Church was originally a member of CIPAE, but left in 1985.) Activities of the CIPAE today include legal defense for innocent citizens and victims of human rights abuses and educational programs on human rights and democracy. CIPAE has also been active in processing evidence uncovered in the "files of terror."

D. Press

Nowhere is the political opening more manifest than in the press. The campaigns of the major candidates are covered extensively in the newspapers and television and no candidate is saved from hard questions about policy or personal business transactions. Journalists pursue sensitive issues such as government corruption and past human rights abuses without fear of reprisal. For example, Rodríguez's son-in-law, Gustavo Saba (also co-owner of one of the two television channels in the country) is under indictment for trafficking arms to Iran and South Africa. The story runs daily in newspapers, on the radio and on television, including Saba's channel 9.

While the state does not censure press coverage, a small group of people own the press and sometimes exert their influence. Nicholas Bo, a supporter of Argaña during the Colorado primaries, owns Radio Cardinal, which has a large audience in the interior, the daily newspaper *Noticias* and one of the two free television stations (there is one cable station) in the country. No law prohibits one individual from owning more than one medium of communication, allowing Bo to accumulate vast economic and political power.

Saba, like his father-in-law, avidly supported Wasmosy during the primaries. Argaña did not appear on his station's news coverage and had few advertisements on the station. One journalist from the station described the station as a "quasi-state-owned enterprise" because of the close relationship between the ownership and the government.

Radio is the primary source of information in Paraguay, with television a distant second. There are many radio stations in the country with frequencies that reach well into the interior. The government allocates free air time on the radio and television to all political parties. The free time is only available a few days before election day and is distributed equally among all

candidates.

There are five daily newspapers in Paraguay. Newspapers reach a smaller audience because of their cost and limited circulation. The 12 percent illiteracy rate also impedes wide readership.

E. Nongovernmental Organizations

1. Decidamos

Decidamos is a consortium of 12 nongovernmental organizations founded in 1989 to provide civic education. Decidamos has conducted civic education programs on the voting process, the role and functions of local government and the significance of the new constitution. Trainers conducted workshops for church organizations, neighborhood committees, student and women's groups as well as for private citizens.

For the 1993 elections, Decidamos has sponsored a nonpartisan "get out the vote" campaign through the newspaper and radio. It is the only nongovernmental organization in Paraguay conducting a civic education campaign. Decidamos has also published a training manual for election officials and party pollwatchers, and has conducted workshops to train party instructors.

2. SAKA

SAKA, a consortium of local nongovernmental organizations, conducted parallel vote counts in 11 municipalities for the 1991 municipal elections. President Rodríguez acknowledged the victory of independent candidate Filizzola in large part because of the timely release of SAKA's results. The JEC did not release officials results until almost one month after elections.

With technical and financial assistance from NDI, SAKA will organize a quick count for the 1993 elections. It has quickly mobilized its structure from the 1991 count. The consortium will draw a random sample of 20 percent of the populace collecting data from 70 different polling sites. The sample is broken down by polling site and data is collected from every voting table in the site. The volunteers will collect data from 1,800 of the 9,000 tables in the country.

Trainers have been conducting workshops throughout the country to inform the quick count volunteers of their election day duties. SAKA has recruited volunteers through the Catholic youth groups and used Church facilities to conduct training sessions. In a pastoral letter, the bishop responsible for the country's youth groups urged members to participate in SAKA, an organization he described as one "that has helped guarantee the respect of the popular will". The bishop who oversees the layworkers (*laicos*) groups wrote a similar letter.

Results of the presidential and senatorial hope to be announced within three hours of the closing of the polls.

F. Organization of American States

The Organization of American States (OAS), which observed the 1989 national and the 1991 municipal and constituent assembly elections, has had observers in Paraguay since March and plans to have 60 by election day. The OAS has negotiated agreements with the Paraguayan government to receive diplomatic immunity for its observers and complete freedom of movement while working in the country. These agreements have been approved by both legislative bodies of Paraguay. The Ministry of External Relations has provided the OAS mission with vehicles and drivers during its stay. The OAS also negotiated an agreement with the JEC, which grants the organization unimpeded access to all electoral information, including registration lists and vote tallies.

During the last four years, the OAS has developed a close working relationship with JEC. This year, an OAS observer has worked full time in the JEC offices overseeing the compilation of the registration list and the administration of the elections. This has allowed the OAS to closely monitor election preparations and make suggestions when necessary. The trust between the two groups allowed the OAS to investigate charges leveled by the opposition and suggest mechanisms to increase access and oversight for the political parties.

Developing this relationship has come at some expense, however. Opposition parties, and even some foreign diplomats, have criticized the OAS for accommodating the JEC and not being sufficiently firm. Additional observer groups have been requested for fear that the OAS would not act in a decisive manner should fraud occur.

VI. ELECTORAL ENVIRONMENT

A. Party Primaries

Electoral legislation requires the parties to select their candidates in a primary. Every party, except the Colorado Party, held its primary without incident. The Colorado Party primary went unresolved for months and raised additional concerns that the general elections would not be trouble-free.

Since the overthrow of Stroessner, the Colorado Party has split between the traditionalists, who support government policy before the coup, and those who seek to open the country politically and economically. Luis Argaña, a former foreign minister under Rodríguez, heads the former group while President Rodríguez, leader of the February coup, leads the latter.

Since the constitution prohibits Rodríguez's re-election, he supported Wasmosy for the party's presidential nomination. Argaña opposed Wasmosy during the primaries. Gustavo Diaz de Vivar represented a possible consensus candidate, but failed to draw support from the two main factions.

The Colorado Party tribunal had originally scheduled elections for November 1992, but postponed them when the Diaz de Vivar faction alleged that 200,000 names on the party registry

did not have official identification numbers. This faction demanded that these names be struck from the registry. The issue went to the Supreme Court where it was decided to exclude the names. Wasmosy opposed the decision, but eventually accepted it. Elections were then rescheduled for December 27, 1992.

Tensions between the two factions mounted during the campaign. Argaña accused the Rodríguez administration of corruption and attacked Wasmosy for being "anti-Colorado, Liberal and an anti-populist businessman." Argaña and his running mate, Luis Ybanez, openly defended the policies of the old regime and promised a "return to Colorado Party rule." As Argaña increased his populist rhetoric, polls showed him with a 7 percentage point lead over Wasmosy in the final days of the campaign. A prominent newspaper, *Ultima Hora*, conducted a national poll that showed one third of the population with a "good or very good" opinion of the Stroessner regime.

Fearing that Wasmosy would attempt to steal the elections, Ybanez warned that people "would take to the streets should they lose the elections through fraud." In response, the commanders of the Army, Air Force and Police announced that "the armed forces would not tolerate [a return to] the period of rule before February 3, 1989." High officials of the armed forces, the instigators of coup against Stroessner, feared repercussions from an Argaña presidency.

On election day, party members turned out in record numbers and voted without incident. There were no reports of violence or attempted fraud. By the end of the day, a local radio station, Radio Ñanduti, predicted an Argaña victory by at least 10,000 votes. As the public count drew to a close, results showed Argaña with 49.7 percent of the vote (213,482 votes) to Wasmosy's 43.3 percent (186,116 votes).

Wasmosy alleged fraud and challenged the validity of the results. Although they could not provide evidence, Wasmosy supporters attributed the fraud to the voter registry. They asserted that missing names, incorrect identification numbers and misassigned voting places in key areas kept their candidate from winning the election. As tensions mounted, four Argaña supporters on the party tribunal resigned, claiming that threats had been made on their lives. The tribunal lacked a quorum and could not certify the election results.

Wasmosy supporters, particularly Army Gen. Lino Oviedo, warned of a possible auto-coup if Argaña was nominated. Rodríguez, however, softened the rhetoric, stating that he would accept any decision by the tribunal. He sought a peaceful solution and called for an extraordinary party convention on February 14, 1993 to elect a new tribunal. To be elected to the tribunal, a member had to receive the vote of at least two-thirds of the participants in the convention. After two separate sessions, no one received a two-thirds vote.

During a third session, some Argaña supporters voted for the Wasmosy candidate and the first tribunal member was finally elected. When the tally of votes exceeded the number of voting members by four, the Argaña supporters walked out, claiming fraud. The remaining Wasmosy supporters quickly elected a new tribunal. The tribunal reviewed the ballots and annulled those it deemed circumspect. Although the constitution requires the count to be public,

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everyone except the tribunal members were denied access.

A new count declared Wasmosy victorious by 4,000 votes. The tribunal certified the results and destroyed the ballots. Because members were voting on a party list by proportional representation, nominations for senator, deputies and departmental posts closely followed the results released after the first count. Two exceptions were the governorships of Paraguari and Concepción, in which Argaña candidates were replaced by Wasmosy candidates.

Argaña did not challenge the new results, because if he had, the Colorado Party would have missed the deadline to register candidates. Paraguayan political analysts have noted that many Argaña supporters were hesitant to challenge the vote because they are fairly represented on the national and departmental lists. Argaña is calling for his supporters to vote for the Colorado Party lists, but not for Wasmosy.

Political leaders and analysts agree that Wasmosy won the nomination by questionable, if not outright fraudulent, means. This has caused great concern about the prospects for free elections on May 9. The opposition argues that if the government was willing to engineer a victory for Wasmosy in the primaries, it will likely try the same in the general elections. Even members within Wasmosy's faction, including Colorado President Blas Riquelme, question Wasmosy's electability given the doubts about the nomination process. Political leaders worry about the legitimacy of a national election in which one of the candidates was chosen in an undemocratic (and perhaps unconstitutional) manner.

B. The Campaign

"Change" is the overriding theme of the presidential campaign. For Wasmosy, change means a transformation from the old-style populist politics to a more fiscally responsible government and a modernized economy. His slogan is "To Move Ahead" (*Para Salir Adelante*).

Laíno, the historical opponent of the Colorados, believes himself to be the heir apparent to the presidency. His party sells him as "The Only Alternative" (*La Unica Alternativa*).

Caballero Vargas, referred to as "Guillermo" by supporters and opponents, projects himself as a vehicle to break with the traditional party system. His slogan is "The Victory of Hope" (*La Victoria de la Esperanza*).

The principal issues of the campaign are restructuring government and vitalizing the economy. All three major candidates advocate privatization and continued membership in the Mercosur common market with Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay. The candidates acknowledge that the government budget must be cut and many public employees will lose their jobs. Wasmosy, the more technocratic of the three, warns that painful measures must be taken whatever the cost while the other two promise a more gradual economic restructuring.

The change from populism to modernization has been costly for Wasmosy. His advocacy of free markets and less government prompted many party members to accuse him of being

unsympathetic to the needs of the people and a closet liberal. Argaña tagged Wasmosy with the nickname "Mbatana," a Guaraní name for a breed of rooster characterized by its red feathers (Colorado Party colors) on top and blue feathers (PLRA colors) on the bottom.

Caballero Vargas garners most of his support from the professional middle class in Asunción. Young people without strong ties to the traditional political parties support him by a large margin over the other candidates. Polls show Caballero Vargas with about 35 percent followed by Wasmosy at 27 percent and Laíno at 24 percent. Other candidates have a combined one percent support, and about 13 percent of the electoral are undecided.

In the countryside, party loyalty is a family tradition handed down from one generation to another. Most rural villages can be defined as either red (Colorado) or blue (PLRA). Polls increasingly show, however, that traditional party members will split their party list for Congress.

No presidential candidate would have a chance for victory if he or she could not deliver speeches in both official languages of Paraguay. Candidates travel throughout the country addressing potential voters in a mixture of Spanish and Guaraní, emphasizing Guaraní the further they travel from Asunción. News articles often quote candidates in Guaraní and only occasionally provide a Spanish translation. Newspaper and television advertisements -- in Spanish -- fill the printed pages and the airwaves.

The Colorado Party holds financial and organizational advantages over the other parties. Throughout the campaign, the party has used government bureaucracy to its advantage. President Rodríguez solicited a "voluntary" donation to the Colorado campaign from all public employees. Rodríguez was widely criticized for this solicitation, which was mandatory during Stroessner's rule, and at least one high ranking government official made clear that she works for the state and not the party.

Still, many public officials realize their jobs could depend on the fortunes of the party, and the Colorado campaign is quick to remind them of this daily. Just three weeks before the election, Minister of Education and Culture Raúl Sapena Brugado was forced to resign from office after refusing to become more active in the Colorado campaign and not pressuring teachers to support the party. Other high level officials in the ministry have resigned in support of Sapena.

The president of the Colorado Party, Blas Riquelme, said in March that he would organize a "special tricks commission" for the elections and he exhorted Colorado Party followers to win the elections "by assault." Although he claims he was joking, his statements alarmed opposition supporters and have contributed to their suspicions about the ruling party's commitment to fair elections.

The Colorado Party has also been accused of using state resources, including government vehicles, for its campaign. A photographer who took pictures of government vehicles at a rally was beaten up by two Colorado Party members.

VII. CONCLUSIONS

Although significant improvements appear to have been made in the electoral process compared to the 1989 national elections and 1991 municipal elections, opposition parties are concerned that elements of the ruling Colorado Party and the military will try to disrupt the process. As a result, the opposition is encouraging foreigners to observe the elections to deter fraud and raise the costs of tampering with the elections.

The opposition's concerns derive from five factors:

1) *Paraguay has a history of election fraud.* As one Paraguayan told the NDI delegation, Paraguay has had *votaciones*, rather than elections. Respect for democratic principles is still not ingrained in Paraguayan political culture, and the temptation to commit fraud, particularly in the interior, is still great.

2) *The Colorado Party, which has ruled since 1954, has undemocratic elements that will be particularly reluctant to cede power.* The Colorado Party leader's statement that he would organize a "special tricks commission" alarmed opposition supporters and have contributed to their suspicions about the ruling party's commitment to fair elections.

3) *Municipal elections held two years ago were an administrative disaster.* The elections were suspended in 29 municipalities due to various administrative problems. If the confusion and chaos that marked election day in many areas two years ago are repeated this year, the legitimacy of the elections will be questioned.

4) *Almost every political observer in Paraguay agrees that Carlos Wasmosy, the Colorado Party candidate, won his party's primary by fraud against Luis Argaña.* Ironically, the fraud was engineered by forces believed to represent the more democratic faction in the Colorado Party against Argaña, who represents the traditional Colorado factions that supported Stroessner. If supporters of Wasmosy, led by President Rodríguez, were willing to steal the primaries, the opposition asks, why won't they try to do the same in the general election?

5) *The military maintains close ties with the Colorado Party and fears investigation into corruption and an exertion of civilian control over the military.* Some observers believe the military would feel particularly threatened by Domingo Laíno, the Liberal Party candidate known internationally for his strident opposition to the Stroessner regime.

Although the opposition is understandably concerned about the electoral process in Paraguay, the evidence to date indicates that the elections are likely to be conducted without major incident. While opposition leaders and activists claim that the government is prepared to engineer a fraudulent election, they are unable to produce evidence of irregularities.

Given the many years of dictatorship that Paraguay is emerging from, the political environment is remarkably free. Political parties and civic groups organize unencumbered, and the press and media cover the most sensitive issues.

The parties recognize they will be able to prevent fraud on election day by stationing observers at every polling site and that vote counts by the parties and civic groups will preclude tampering with the results. With domestic monitors scrutinizing the process and international observers monitoring the balloting and counting, the blatant fraud of the Colorado primary cannot be easily repeated in the general elections.

The assumption that the Colorado Party and military will be reluctant to cede power may be unwarranted. President Rodríguez, at age 77, wants to be remembered as the man who guided Paraguay's democratic transition and transferred power to an elected civilian from another party. The parties acknowledge that the substantive differences among the three candidates are few. And the leading opposition candidates have gone out of their way not to say anything that would alarm the military.

When pressed, the opposition acknowledges that the only potentially weak aspect of the process is the registration lists. The parties received the registration lists one month before the elections in order to verify their accuracy. The opposition fears that the electoral council, which is controlled by the Colorado Party, will purge the names of opposition supporters or assign them to voting sites far from their homes. Such charges can begin to be substantiated only after the parties have an opportunity to check the lists. If the lists are inaccurate, the parties must file claims before the electoral council.

There will be many of observers in Paraguay. The OAS, which is optimistic about the process, has five people there already and expect to have 40 to 60 by election day. NDI will have a 20-person delegation. Other groups are sending observers as well.

APPENDIX I

Agenda for NDI Survey Mission
March 28 - 31, 1993
Asuncion, Paraguay

SUNDAY, MARCH 28

- 15:30. Introduction and briefing
Steve Griner, NDI Program Officer
- 19:00 Carlos Maria Lezcano, military analyst
Social Sciences Group
- 17:00 Stela Rulfinelli, reporter
Channel 9
- 18:00 Members of OAS observer mission
- 20:00 Dinner in the Hotel Guarani
Diego Abente, Encuentro Nacional
Bernardino Cano Radil, Colorado Party
Alfonso Caballero, Authentic Radical Liberal Party

MONDAY, MARCH 29

- 8:00 Juan C. Wasmosy, presidential candidate
National Republican Association (Colorado Party)
- 10:00 Guillermo Caballero Vargas, presidential candidate
Encuentro Nacional
- 11:30 Adolfo Grau, Director of Registration
Central Electoral Board
- 12:00 Lunch
- 14:00 Joaquin Casal, PLRA representative
Central Electoral Board
- 16:00 Carlos Moljoli, President
Gladys Lahaje de Leon
Electoral Court of Asuncion
- 17:00 Luis Argana
National Republican Association (Colorado Party)
- 20:00 Dinner

TUESDAY, March 30

8:30 Minister Hugo Estigarribia
Ministry of the Interior

10:00 Jose Luis Ibarra Llano, President
Rafael Jacobo, member
Central Electoral Board

12:00 Lunch

12:30 Leave for Paraguari and Carapegua

14:30 Sectional Electoral Board in Paraguari
Panfilo Moreno Servin, president

15:30 Sectional Electoral Board in Carapegua
Anibal Cabrera, president

17:00 Candidates for governor in department of Paraguari

18:00 Celso Yegros, Bishop of Paraguari

19:00 Return to Asuncion

21:00 Dinner

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 31

8:00 Domingo Laino, presidential candidate
Authentic Radical Liberal Party

10:00 Gen. Rejis Romero, Chief
Military Cabinet of the Presidency

12:00 Members of nongovernmental consortium SAKA
(parallel vote count)

15:00 Jonathon Glassman, U.S. Ambassador to Paraguay

16:00 Leave for airport

PARAGUAY NATIONAL ELECTIONS
MAY 9, 1993
DEPLOYMENT TEAMS

1. *Asuncion I*

Jimmy Carter
Ken Wollack
Mark Feierstein *
Bob Pastor
Jim Rosenau

2. *Asuncion II*

Steve Griner *
Al Graham
Rodrigo Carazo
Ken Melley
Elizabeth Bagley
Edgardo Mimica
David Carroll
Mary Hill
Francisco Diez

3. *Colonel Oviedo*

Patricia Weir *
Jacqueline Pitanguy
Enrique Bernales

4. *Ciudad del Este*

Bev Nagel *
Emmanuel Phiri
Pierre Letamendia
Marta Perez
Cedric Grant
Stephen Schlesinger

5. *Concepcion*

Curtis Cutter *
Pedro Gomez de la Fuente
Rita Dimartino
Rob Black

6. *Pedro Juan Caballero*

Lourdes Alvarado *
Mikhail Schneider
Timothy Towell

7. *Encarnacion*

Katie Kelsch *
Bonginkosi Mhlanga
Leo Valladares

* Deployment Coordinator

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PRELIMINARY POST-ELECTION STATEMENT

**INTERNATIONAL DELEGATION TO THE
NATIONAL ELECTIONS IN PARAGUAY**

May 10, 1993
Asunción, Paraguay

We are pleased to offer this preliminary statement on behalf of the international observer delegation sponsored by the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) and the Council of Freely Elected Heads of Government. The delegation, which consists of 31 members from 15 countries, yesterday witnessed Paraguay's national elections.

The delegation observed the balloting and counting in six major cities -- Asunción, Colonel Oviedo, Ciudad del Este, Concepcion, Encarnacion and Pedro Juan Caballero -- as well as in smaller surrounding municipalities. This statement represents a consensus view of our observations.

The delegation has been here since Wednesday, May 5. On Thursday and Friday, the delegation met with a broad spectrum of government officials, political leaders, candidates, military officials, civic leaders and members of the Central Electoral Board. On Saturday, most of the delegates deployed to the interior of the country to meet with local candidates and electoral officials. On Sunday, we observed the balloting in 333 mesas (voting tables) at 44 polling sites covering roughly 22 percent of the electorate.

The delegation benefitted from the experience of NDI and the Council. NDI, which organized observer delegations to the 1989 national and 1991 municipal elections, has supported civic education programs in Paraguay during the past four years and recently organized workshops to train local officials. The Council and NDI have had experience monitoring the electoral process in 11 countries in the Western Hemisphere.

NDI provided assistance to SAKA, the consortium of nongovernmental organizations, to conduct a quick count for the election. NDI also sponsored a visit by two Panamanian experts in voter registration to help the political parties review the registration lists. In March, NDI sent a five-person team to study the electoral process. Last week, NDI published a report based on the team's findings and the observations and research conducted by NDI Program Officer Steve Griner, who has been in Paraguay for six weeks.

The delegation notes that the final tabulation of results has not been completed. Therefore, this statement reflects a preliminary assessment by the delegation. A more detailed final report will be issued next month. Representatives of NDI and the Council will remain in Paraguay to await the announcement of the results and to investigate electoral challenges and complaints.

Since the coup in 1989, Paraguay has made impressive democratic progress. During this year's campaign, political parties and civic groups were largely allowed to organize unencumbered. Candidates freely debated the most contentious issues. Journalists freely investigated the candidates' backgrounds and analyzed their platforms. One independent newspaper editor, who had suffered repression in the past, told our delegation that the press has become free in the past four years.

Throughout the country, the elections were generally conducted in a peaceful and orderly manner. Particularly in urban areas, the elections were administered properly, in contrast to the 1991 municipal elections when thousands of voters were unable to locate their voting sites on election day. Despite the sometimes sluggish administration of the balloting, voters waited patiently to cast their ballots. There was no evidence on Sunday that the registration lists had been altered to hinder the ability of opposition supporters to find their voting sites, as opposition parties had feared.

Most disputes were resolved peacefully by the election officials and party pollwatchers at the mesas. The apoderados (polling site supervisors) offered assistance to voters and mesa officials, and pollwatchers from different political parties worked cooperatively.

As in all transitional elections, many of the parties raised deep concerns that certain election problems could result in fraud on election day. We decided to test the magnitude of these problems while seeking to determine any patterns to these irregularities in a questionnaire that our observers filled out at each of the mesas and sites visited.

Our observers covered 333 mesas and in addition surveyed 44 voting sites through discussions with apoderados that covered 1865 mesas or roughly 21 percent of all the mesas in the country. This did not represent a systematic sample, but rather an attempt to cover large areas of the country. The results of the survey indicate that these problems rarely occurred and were isolated.

.. While there was initially some concern that the election officials would not be representative, our survey found that there were three election officials, generally representing three different parties in 99.1% of the mesas and 99.7% of the sites with complete survey responses.

.. Pollwatchers play an invaluable role on election day, and as a rule, we have found that elections are more likely to be free if all the major parties have pollwatchers. Our survey found that pollwatchers representing at least two parties were present at 76.3% of the mesas and

93% of the responding sites. This, however, understates the coverage because of the representativeness of the polling officials and the presence of apoderados.

.. Some people were concerned that election materials would not be available in sufficient supply, but our survey found that they were at 96.8% of the mesas and 99.4% of the responding sites.

.. Despite concerns that the full list of polling procedures would not be followed, they were generally followed without significant problems at 94% of the mesas and 95% of the responding sites.

.. Significantly, given the concerns raised about the quality of the voters list, the survey found that voters were generally able to find the correct location and to vote without problems at 97.3% of the mesas and 98.6% of the responding sites.

.. Most importantly, the overall voting process was satisfactory at 92.5% of the mesas and 94.5% of the responding sites.

Irregularities were more common in the interior. Our delegates witnessed intimidation of voters by Colorado Party members and observed mesas where, in violation of the electoral code, all the electoral officials were members of the ruling party. There was also evidence that false identification cards had been issued. While these irregularities were isolated, the delegation takes these problems seriously and urges authorities to investigate promptly all election-related complaints.

We also condemn the actions deliberately taken to restrict the ability of Paraguayans to monitor their own electoral process. SAKA, which conducted independent vote tabulations to accurately project the election results, was unable to tabulate these results with sufficient speed because the telephone company blocked many of its lines. Explanations provided by the authorities, who attributed the problems to unavoidable technical difficulties, are not credible. Paraguayan authorities have the technical know-how to have restored seven of SAKA's phone lines, but, we believe, a decision was made to obstruct the organization's work.

Despite these efforts, the consortium completed the quick count that confirmed the tendency of the official results. We commend the thousands of SAKA volunteers for having accomplished this under difficult circumstances and with great enthusiasm, dedication and integrity. Their work attests to the emergence of a strong and active civil society in Paraguay.

We are also concerned about certain events that occurred during the campaign, as well as in the past several days. They detracted from the overall positive campaign environment. Although the holding of primaries to select candidates was a positive step toward the democratization of Paraguay's political parties, the disputed Colorado Party primaries created

uncertainty among the electorate about the prospects for a fair general election. The allegations of fraud in the primaries were never satisfactorily resolved.

The generally festive atmosphere on election day was marred by news of two incidents: the attack on Channel 13 early Sunday morning and the closing of Paraguay's border at certain points. We urge the authorities to investigate the attack on the television station, and we trust that this attempt to intimidate the vigorous Paraguayan press will fail.

The judicial decision to close the border in many areas apparently denied some Paraguayans living outside the country the right to vote. Although it is not clear how many registered voters were among those who were not permitted to return to Paraguay, all the presidential candidates denounced this disenfranchisement of prospective voters and violation of Paraguayan's rights to enter the country. Ironically, while Paraguay welcomed hundred of international observers, many Paraguayans who had hoped to participate in the elections were unable to do so.

Throughout the electoral process, optimism about the improved political environment and electoral administration was constantly tempered by uncertainty about the commitment to the democratic process of certain elements within the military. General Lino Oviedo's involvement in the electoral process was a blatant violation of the constitutional prohibition against the military from participating in partisan politics. His threat days before the election that the military and the Colorado Party would rule for centuries raised legitimate fears that a victory by the opposition would not be accepted.

Despite the above mentioned irregularities, the delegation has not received evidence that these were systematic or extensive enough to significantly alter the final results.

Looking to the future elections, the delegation believes that steps should be taken to increase confidence in the electoral process. Political party representatives should be assured greater access to any information handled by the National Electoral Board. The nine-member board should meet more frequently to allow opposition parties to participate in the decision-making process. The electoral board should provide the political parties with the voter registration lists on disks to facilitate verification of the lists. The delegation also recommends that the government and electoral board carry out greater civic education programs.

Reaching consensus on such reforms should be easier since yesterday's election has altered the political landscape in Paraguay, which was dominated for so many years by a single party. The composition of the next Congress and regional government bodies will reflect the more pluralistic nature of Paraguayan society.

The winner of the elections faces great opportunities and challenges. The next government can either be constrained by autocratic elements that may try to retard Paraguay's transition toward democracy or it can respond affirmatively to the Paraguayan people's desire to accelerate that transition. Yesterday's results have shown that most Paraguayans want the

democratic opening here to continue and expand.

Because the next government is not likely to have a majority in Congress, cooperation among the political parties will be essential. That cooperation should begin as soon as possible. We encourage the president-elect to begin a dialogue with the other major parties, whose assistance will be needed to effectively govern.

We urge the ruling party to sever its ties with the military and to work toward the establishment of a professional nonpartisan force. Civilian control of the military must be enhanced by training members of Congress on military affairs and by strengthening the independence and capacity of the Ministry of Defense.

The delegation emphasizes that the holding of competitive elections, while essential, is but one aspect of a democratic society. It is apparent that many challenges remain in this regard in Paraguay. Among the tasks that remain are the creation of a strong legislative branch to oversee the executive and a greater role for local and regional governments. It will be the Paraguayan people and their elected representatives at all levels who must strive to meet these challenges. The international community remains committed to supporting their efforts.

Selected Team Reports

International Observer Delegation Paraguay National Elections May 1993

The delegation divided into teams to observe the elections in cities and towns throughout Paraguay. This appendix contains edited versions of reports prepared by three teams.

CIUDAD DEL ESTE

Prepared by Beverly Nagel

Introduction

The six-member delegation deployed to Ciudad del Este comprised Cedric Grant, Pierre Letamendia, Beverly Nagel, Marta Perez, Emmanuel Phiri and Stephen Schlesinger.

Ciudad del Este is the second largest city in Paraguay, with a population of about 100,000. Situated on the border with Brazil, the city was founded only 32 years ago when transportation links between Asunción and Brazilian cities were completed. It is a free port and has become known as the capital of the Paraguayan smuggling trade.

Pre-Election Briefings

The delegation arrived in Ciudad del Este on Saturday morning, meeting first with the military governmental delegate then jointly with members of the sectional electoral board and the electoral court of Ciudad del Este. After a break for lunch, we divided into two groups. During the afternoon, members of the delegation met with gubernatorial candidates of the National Encounter (EN), Workers Party and three independent movements. We regrouped in later in the afternoon to interview the Colorado Party candidate for governor, Carlos Barreto. We were unable to reschedule a meeting with the PLRA gubernatorial candidate, and a planned session with the OAS observers early Sunday morning was also canceled.

The officials with whom we met on Saturday morning reported that all had run smoothly during the pre-election period. Members of the sectional electoral board and electoral court noted that a printing error had been detected on the ballot, but that it had been corrected. A dispute had arisen among the political parties over the allocation of positions at the voting tables, but that problem had also been resolved. They did not foresee any problems on election day, either in Ciudad del Este or throughout the region.

The political party representatives offered a somewhat different picture. Three of the opposition candidates noted the tremendous advantages enjoyed by the Colorado candidate because of his ability to obtain access to the state apparatus for his campaign. We heard allegations that

resources of Itaipu dam were being directed to the Colorado campaign (though no specific instances were provided) and that state vehicles were being used for political purposes.

Members of the Popular Regional Movement of Alto Paraná, a regional party comprise break-away Argaña supporters, claimed that the Colorados were responsible for gunfire near their meeting the preceding evening. Efforts to reach the appropriate authorities to complain were unsuccessful.

Milton Perez, the Workers Party candidate for governor, complained that his party had been excluded or marginalized from various meetings preceding the elections. According to the law, the selection of table officials allocated for each table one Colorado representative, one PLRA representative and a third official to be chosen by lottery. However, before the law went into effect, the parties and movements in Alto Paraná had organized a meeting to assign positions at the voting tables according to their own design, dividing up the positions by mutual agreement. The Workers Party only learned of the meeting after the fact; hence they were accorded no officials at voting tables. Similarly, they were excluded from a meeting that the parties had organized with the OAS observers. However, only the Workers Party complained of being excluded from these meetings.

Although the National Encounter representatives did not complain of pre-election manipulation or harassment, they presented us with a long list of anticipated instances of election-day fraud, several of which seemed a bit unlikely. Nearly all of the anticipated problems concerned nullifying election results. For example, they feared that Colorado election officials would sign ballots with disappearing ink so that the ballots would appear valid when cast, but would lack one of the requisite signatures when they were counted. They also feared that Colorado table officials would use a ruse to mark the presidential ballots as they signed them, so that those ballots would be later declared invalid.

We were also told that the Colorados had hired thugs to steal the ballot boxes should the voting appear to be going against them. This mass theft was scheduled for 2 p.m. on election day.

The EN also alleged that the Colorados had created identification cards for dead persons, had planned to switch registration lists to create confusion, and had perfected a process, called *calecita*, for guaranteeing bought votes. In this scenario for fraud, each person who agrees to sell his/her vote is given an already marked ballot to cast, and must return a blank one in order to collect payment. The blank ballot is then marked and passed on to the next "purchased" voter.

EN pollwatchers and table officials had also been warned not to share *maté*, a customary tea that is communally shared, or food offered to them by Colorados. They feared that the Colorados would slip laxatives into the food or otherwise adulterate it so that the opposition election workers would be unable to perform their duties.

Our interview with the Colorado candidate for governor, Carlos Sarrubi Barreto, was quite unlike any of our other interviews. Barreto has long been one of the most powerful men in Alto Paraná. He is know on the street as "Don Carleoni" after the Godfather. Reputed to have made his

fortune through smuggling, today he is believed to control much of the smuggling traffic through Ciudad del Este. He also owns one of the major radio stations in Alto Paraná, as well as the local casino. We were received at his estate outside of Ciudad del Este, located adjacent to the radio station that he owns, and entertained graciously.

Several of Barreto's comments proved quite fateful in light of subsequent events. When one of our delegation members asked Barreto whether he used television in his campaign, he replied that he customarily turned down interviews with television and newspaper media because they always twist his words. Instead, he wages a personal campaign, appealing directly to the people, mingling with them, talking to them, and using only radio for more public campaigning. He also suggested that we observe voting in the community of Minga Guazú, in addition to Ciudad del Este.

Closing the Border

Late that night, we were informed by ordinary citizens that the officials on the Puente de la Paz (the bridge connecting Brazil and Paraguay) had threatened to close the border. Although traffic was permitted to cross, some motorists had been advised that they might not be allowed to re-enter Paraguay later that night. We heard no reports of anyone actually refused entry, however, and this was not reported as a problem on election day.

Election Day

On Sunday, we again split into two teams to observe the voting. Although both groups began the day at the main voting site, the Regional Center in Ciudad del Este, one group subsequently travelled to Hernandarias, Juan Leon Mallorquin and Minga Guazú. The second team observed voting in Puerto Franco in the afternoon. Altogether, we visited seven voting sites in five localities, representing nearly two-thirds of all voting tables in the department of Alto Paraná. In all cases, the voting was orderly, though often slow. Election workers at all sites and representing all parties assured us that adequate materials were available and that all tables were covered by an adequate number of election workers and pollwatchers.

Ciudad del Este

In Ciudad del Este, given that more than 200 tables were crowded into one site, voting proceeded with remarkable order. Some tables were delayed from opening for as much as an hour, largely because ballot boxes and other materials could not be distributed from the central board office quickly enough. This delay led to long lines in some cases.

At one table, party representatives nearly came to blows over the seating of election workers. An election official from the Colorado Party claimed that the PLRA table official had not arrived on time to officiate. He had replaced him with one of his own colleagues, which meant that all three table officials were Colorado Party members. A member of the sectional electoral board was present, electoral code in hand, and much shouting ensued. Three policemen stood nearby watching closely,

but made no attempt to intervene. In the end, the third Colorado table official was replaced by a PLRA representative, and voting began.

Aside from this incident, we observed no problems in voting. One Colorado table official refused to allow our team to approach his table. On another occasion, the table president, a Colorado Party member, allowed us to observe but made clear his displeasure. We also encountered a similar problem in observing during the vote count.

Hernandarias, Juan Leon Mallorquin and Presidente Franco

Voting in Hernandarias, Juan Leon Mallorquin, and Presidente Franco proceeded smoothly. At all three sites, voting began on time, and election workers reported no problems.

However, our delegation observed a palpable police presence in Hernandarias. At least three armed police stood guard at each of the narrow gateways through which voters entered the polling site. Inside, both ordinary police and members of the Special Forces were present. Additional armed guards stood at attention at the entrance to the offices used by the sectional electoral board. Policemen and Special Forces members strolled from table to table inside the polling place, apparently flirting with young women working as Colorado pollwatchers and table officials. Although we did not observe the police intervening in any manner, their presence was far more overt and far more extensive than in other localities that we visited.

Officials in Hernandarias also reported two problems with registration lists: 1) married women were listed under their maiden names, leading to confusion in locating the correct voting table; and 2) some people who had registered for the Colorado Party primary erroneously believed that the earlier registration counted for the national elections as well, and consequently did not find their names on the registration lists.

In Juan Leon Mallorquin, the atmosphere was extremely festive. Entire families, including children and infants, were present and stood around drinking *tereré*, a typical Paraguayan tea. Though virtually no one reported problems, the lines at some of the tables were extremely long. Some voters had waited in line for more than two hours without reaching the table.

Ironically, when our team arrived in Minga Guazú, we walked into one polling site and directly into Carlos Barreto and a number of his supporters campaigning. Barreto was ostensibly being interviewed by a radio journalist (employed by his own radio station), and making a very loud campaign speech within about 10 feet of a line of voters. EN site officials filed a complaint with the sectional electoral board about Barreto's campaigning activities; they had earlier filed a complaint against some of his campaign workers who had reportedly strolled up and down the lines of people waiting to vote, pressuring them to vote for Barreto.

The EN site officials reported considerable harassment and tension in the community during preceding days. Allegedly, Barreto supporters from the Colorado Party harassed members of the Popular Regional Movement of Alto Paraná.

Although we tried to speak with other site officials, the radio reporter employed by Barreto clung to us like a barnacle, making impossible frank conversation with voters, election workers and other site officials.

Vote Count

Our delegation observed the vote counting in both Hernandarias and Ciudad del Este. In Hernandarias, counting proceeded without incident, although SAKÃ workers reported that in the days preceding the elections, local Colorado officials had exerted considerable pressure on them to abandon their work.

In Ciudad del Este, the counting, in general, proceeded smoothly. At one table, however, our delegation observed a quarrel among table officials over nullification of votes. That quarrel was eventually resolved by the participants themselves.

In another instance, a SAKÃ worker requested assistance from members of our delegation. The officials at his assigned table had refused to allow him to record the count. We accompanied the student back to the table and observed as he repeated his request for voting count tallies. The table officials grabbed the ballot box and angrily marched off toward the sectional electoral board office, without so much as a comment to either the SAKÃ worker or us. Fortunately, a member of the sectional board staff was present and shared with the SAKÃ worker his tally of the table's results.

Conclusions

Despite these incidents, the delegation was impressed with the competence with which the elections were administered, especially compared to past elections. The parties appeared to be well-represented at polling sites. The Colorados were clearly well-organized and mobilized, with numerous representatives at all sites, even employing fleets of taxis to carry voters to polling sites in locations as remote as Juan Leon Mallorquin.

The National Encounter and the Popular Regional Movement of Alto Paraná also appeared well-organized, with numerous table officials and pollwatchers in all locations. The PLRA appeared less organized, though the party had pollwatchers and table officials at all locations. Their site officials, however, were difficult to locate (or absent) at several of the polling sites we visited. Of the numerous other movements, only the Workers Party appeared well represented, with site officials in Ciudad del Este, Hernandarias and Juan Leon Mallorquin.

We were also greatly impressed by the patience of the voters who often stood in line for long periods of time, and with the festive atmosphere that we observed in several voting sites. The fact

that families would bring their children, even infants, to the voting place reflected a level of confidence in the peaceful nature of the process, which we viewed as a highly positive development.

On the other hand, we were distressed especially by the delay in opening some tables in Ciudad del Este, by the powerful police presence in Hernandarias, and by Carlos Barreto's blatant violation of electoral law, in campaigning and pressuring voters inside a voting site. Likewise, the negative attitudes toward our delegation and toward the students working with SAKÃ indicate a disturbing mentality and deep entrenchment on the part of some members of the official party that may well diminish public confidence in the electoral process; such a state of mind is reflected in the fears of systematic fraud expressed by the National Encounter.

ITAPÚA

Prepared by Catherine Kelsch, Leo Valladares and Bonginkosi Mhlanga.

Introduction

Our three-member team observed the elections in Paraguay's southern-most department, Itapúa, which borders Argentina. An estimated 138,000 registered voters live in the department. The capital of Itapúa, Encarnación, is located approximately 180 miles southeast of Asunción and has approximately 30,000 registered voters. The team observed the voting and counting process in Encarnación and in two other towns in the department, Edelira and Natalio.

Pre-Election Briefings

Upon arriving in Encarnación on the day before the elections, the delegation met with the OAS coordinator for southern Paraguay, members of the sectional electoral board and representatives of the three major parties. The candidates and election officials shared with the delegation their pre-election and election-day concerns in Itapúa.

Decidamos, a consortium of civic education nongovernmental organizations, set up a table in the central park that provided citizens with information about the voting locations and the balloting process. A mock voting booth allowed people to simulate the actual voting process.

The OAS coordinator had been working in Itapúa for more than a month, during which time she developed a good rapport with members of the sectional board and the political parties. The OAS had visited all of the voting sites and assured the team that everything looked ready -- the election materials had arrived and voting locations had been confirmed. She was very informative; she updated the team on developments in the region and helped the group plan an effective observer route.

The members of the sectional board discussed notable pre-election issues. Opposition party members expressed concern over the: 1) participation of the military in partisan politics; 2) distribution of fake identification cards; 3) falsification of names on the registration list; and 4) switching of voting locations. The situation at the border caused the greatest distress, especially for the Liberal Party members. (See "The Border Closing " below.)

Colorado Party sectional board members were not worried about election-day irregularities. They believed that any election-day problems would affect all parties equally and would not hurt or help any one party.

When asked about potential administrative difficulties in Itapúa, the sectional board members replied that they did not foresee such problems on election day in Encarnación. However, they indicated that difficulties could arise in the outlying areas of the department, but offered no plan to avert them. Sectional board members also implied that election administration in the outlying areas was not their responsibility.

In separate meetings, representatives and candidates from the Colorado, Authentic Radical Liberal (PLRA) and National Encounter parties shared their perspective on the election-day situation. National Encounter members discussed five towns in the department, constituting approximately 11 percent of the vote for the region, that were not allowed to place National Encounter members at the voting tables. The movement's members were very upset about this situation and requested that the team visit these sites on election day. National Encounter had been told that their table officials and observers would not be allowed at these locations because their lists of polling officials and volunteers had not been submitted on time. National Encounter members rebutted this claim and had petitioned the electoral court. As of the day before the elections, the court had still not ruled on the matter.

The Border Closing

On the day before the elections, the military began requiring the military service card as a mandatory document to enter the country. By law, the military service card may be requested at any time, but it is not normally required as an entry requirement at the border. This issue was discussed in length at pre-election meetings.

As in the sectional board meeting, the PLRA members stated their grave concern over the situation at the border. Paraguayans residing outside the country and those who could not produce their military service card were barred entry; some PLRA members estimated that 30,000 people had been affected. They requested that the team visit the border to study the situation. PLRA members also expressed great distress over military involvement in pre-election political activities and the diversion of state resources to benefit the Colorado Party campaign.

Representatives from the Colorado Party did not foresee any problems with the elections. Party members used the meeting time to rebut the claims raised by the opposition parties. Colorado Party members denied allegations of fraud. In response to the border closing, party members

explained that the borders were closed to guarantee the security of the country, a common practice in many countries during elections. Members cited a statute in the constitution that prohibits from voting those Paraguayans residing outside of the country. They implied that this law legitimized the border closing.

When asked about the requirement to produce the military service card, party members told the team that the card may be requested at any time to show proof of military service. They maintained that the card had been requested at the border during the previous four months. Finally, they explained that military officials are allowed to belong to a political party as long as they registered with the party before 1992. Military officials are free to express their opinion and state their party affiliation. They are restricted only from participating in party activities.

The team also visited the border to witness the entry proceedings and speak to the colonel there. During the 20-minute period the team observed the cars were stopped regularly and asked for identification. The border police detained only one car, and this vehicle eventually crossed. Observers saw Colorado campaign signs, but no materials from other parties.

During the discussion with the colonel, the team raised the concerns expressed by the parties about the existing border situation. The colonel told the group that the law requires Paraguayans to live in the country in order to be able to vote. He explained that a judicial order had recently passed banning non-resident Paraguayans from entering the country. He made no mention of the fact that the border would later close completely. In response to questions about the military service card, the colonel stated that it was normal procedure to request the card at any time. However, he later admitted that the card was not requested everyday as an entry requirement.

The next morning during the distribution of materials at the municipality building, an opposition party official notified the team that the borders had been closed at approximately 4:30 a.m.

Election Day

The team arrived at the municipality building just before 6 a.m. to observe the distribution of the voting materials. Supplies for each table were compiled and placed in a small bag marked with the table number. Each bag contained a list of registered voters, five sets of ballots, a copy of the electoral code and a pen. Ballot boxes were retrieved from outside the office where materials were handed out. The president of the board greeted each table president, checked the card authorizing him/her to serve as table president and announced his/her table number. Representatives of each of the three major parties kept track of the names of the table presidents as they retrieved their materials. Everyone seemed excited about the elections and their participation in the process.

The observer group proceeded to observe the poll opening activities at two of the six polling sites in Encarnación. Both appeared to be progressing well and encountering only minor problems, which included an insufficient number of tables, a shortage of tape to seal the ballot boxes and the absence of some table officials.

Polls in Encarnación opened on time, some even a bit early. The voting material and table layout appeared to be fairly organized. Within the first half an hour, however, it was evident that a central information point was needed to direct voters to their appropriate voting tables. If a voter arrived at the polls without knowing his/her specific voting table, he/she had to inquire at each table separately. Most people appeared to know where to vote, but there were a noticeable number of people searching to find their table. Although one location claimed to be creating a central information table, no other polling site in Encarnación provided any type of assistance for voters who did not know their table number.

Encarnación

The team spent the morning observing voting locations in Encarnación. Encarnación comprised a total of six voting locations, with the number of tables at each site ranging from nine to 52. Representatives of the three major parties were present at each table. Table officials cooperated with one another and followed the correct voting procedures. Voting progressed slowly with some disorganization evident. The team encountered occasional problems at the voting sites: 1) lack of tape to seal the voting boxes; 2) scarcity of ink at some tables; 3) replacement of a *vocal* (table official) with a pollwatcher at one site; 4) presence of military official in front of, and in some cases inside, the voting sites; and 5) absence of some names from the official voter registration list.

Most tables did not possess tape to seal ballot boxes. When a sectional board member from the Colorado Party was asked about the tape, he responded that it was not needed because the boxes were transparent. The table official then noted that the tape would also be needed at the end of the night to seal the envelope that contained the ballots and results. The sectional board member made no comment in reference to this point.

As noted, military officials walked around in front of and inside some voting sites, though the team did not observe any military interference in any election proceedings. In the instances where military officials were present inside the sites, there appeared to be little, if any, voter intimidation.

In the afternoon, the team observed the voting in outlying areas of Itapúa: Natalio, Edelira and Capitan Miranda.

Natalio

Natalio had one voting site with 32 tables to serve approximately 6,400 registered voters.

In general, the same cooperative atmosphere and scattered problems existed in Natalio as in Encarnación. The military was again present, one to four officers, in front of, and in some cases inside, polling sites. While military officials did not appear to interfere in any way, their presence was apparent. Voters who arrived without knowing their table numbers encountered difficulty locating their assigned tables. Voting was more disorganized; no lines were formed nor did a procedure exist for allowing voters to proceed to the voting booths.

Table officials did not always represent three different parties as stipulated in the constitution. However, pollwatchers from the unrepresented party were present at these tables actively observing all proceedings.

A table official informed the team that voting began an hour late in Natalio. A National Encounter official stated that only the day before, three locations had consolidated into that site. This information ran counter to information contained on a list of voting locations provided to the team a week before the elections that indicated that Natalio would encompass one site. The observer team was also told that officials at the general information table, located approximately 80 meters in front of the voting site, were verbally campaigning for the Colorado Party in addition to directing voters to their tables. After one of the team members investigated this activity, the information table was moved further away from the voting site.

Edelira

Late in the afternoon, the team observed voting in Edelira where one voting location with 29 tables accommodated approximately 5,800 voters.

The irregularities specific only to Edelira included the less-than-private voting booths and a substantial distance between many of the check-in tables and their respective voting booths. Many of the voting booth curtains were quite transparent, and several were too small to provide adequate privacy. Moreover, several of the voting booths were located down the hall or around the corner from their respective check-in tables giving rise to a potential for ballot tampering. However, the team did not observe any irregularities arising from these circumstances.

Capitan Miranda

While returning to Encarnación, the team stopped at Capitan Miranda. Table officials told the team that the town had three voting sites, which conflicted with the information obtained a week earlier indicating that Capitan Miranda would have one voting location with 16 tables. At the site visited, there were only three tables. Since it was after 4 p.m., most voters had already cast their ballots. Table officials reported that voting had occurred without incident.

Counting Process

The team observed the closing of the polls and the counting process in Encarnación. At 5 p.m., the table officials and pollwatchers voted. The officials reviewed their lists and crossed off the names of those people who had not voted, after which they counted the number of people who had voted and those who had not. The ballot boxes were opened, and the ballots were removed and separated into their five respective offices. The signatures of the table officials were verified on the back of each ballot. The ballots were further separated and counted for all offices.

The ballot separation and counting differed from table to table. Questionable ballots were discussed and decided upon by table officials and pollwatchers. The site party officials also helped mediate discussions and resolve questions regarding the validity of ballots.

SAKĀ volunteers were highly visible overseeing the counting process. These high-school students helped provide a sense of optimism about the election process. A local radio station, Radio Paraná, also placed young volunteers at the tables to collect results. Aside from these young observers, few other people watched the count.

Overall, the closing and counting process appeared very smooth. Table officials and pollwatchers worked diligently into the evening hours sorting and counting ballots. Uncertainties that arose regarding the validity of a ballots were solved in a peaceful and democratic manner.

Conclusions

The team believed that the scattered irregularities that occurred on and before election day did not significantly affect the results of the elections in the department of Itapúa.

Pre-election concerns raised by the three parties, such as blatant military involvement in the election activities, the use of fake I.D. cards, multiple voting, or relocating voting sites, did not appear to materialize. Moreover, election administration in the outlying areas appeared similar to that of Encarnación, relatively smooth but disorganized. In regard to National Encounter's concerns, however, the team was not able to visit those polling sites requested by the party, all of which proved too difficult to reach. Finally, the border was opened at approximately 3 p.m., allowing voters outside the country to enter and cast their ballots.

The team acknowledges irregularities and problems. However, it also recognizes that the democratic process in Paraguay has come a long way in four years. The team was impressed by the cooperation demonstrated among parties to oversee and support the elections process. Paraguayans are to be congratulated for their hard work and devotion to the electoral process and are encouraged to maintain this dedication as their democracy develops in the years ahead.

COLONEL OVIEDO

Prepared by Patricia Weir, Enrique Bernales and Jacqueline Pitanguy.

Colonel Oviedo is a municipality of 30,000 people in the department of Caáguazu.

Pre-Election Briefings

Upon arriving in Colonel Oviedo on Saturday, May 8, the team met with the representative from the Organization of American States, the mayor of Colonel Oviedo, the president of the

electoral court, and the president of the sectional board. The team visited the campaign headquarters of the Authentic Radical Liberal Party, the Colorado Party, and National Encounter Movement, and met with their respective campaign directors and gubernatorial candidates. Campaign activities and electoral administrative preparation appeared to be proceeding without incident. While the opposition parties did not raise any specific complaints, party members did note that the Colorado Party was highly organized, and therefore enjoyed a greater electoral advantage.

Later that day, the team visited Simon Bolivar, a rural district about 30 kilometers from Colonel Oviedo. The team received several reports about irregularities in that area. Apparently, the Colorado Party refused to agree to a lottery to allow other parties to be seated at the voting tables. During its visit, the team confirmed these reports with opposition members.

Election Day

On election day, the team visited polling sites in Colonel Oviedo, Simon Bolivar, Cecilio Baez and San Jose.

Colonel Oviedo and San Jose

In Colonel Oviedo, the team visited three polling sites, each containing 15 to 54 tables. In San Jose, the team observed one site with 23 tables. All of the voting sites were located in schools.

In general, voting in Colonel Oviedo and San Jose progressed smoothly. The major parties fielded voting table officials and pollwatchers. All of the parties expressed pleasure with the process. The team noted a couple of small problems: some voting tables opened late and some voters were denied eligibility. However, these were isolated events. The team also noticed that National Encounter had a much smaller presence compared to the other two major parties, both in term of pollwatchers and site party officials. Furthermore, the Colorado Party was much stronger and imposing than the other two parties.

Simon Bolivar and Cecilio Baez

The team visited two voting sites in Simon Bolivar, one with seven tables and the other with three, and one site in Cecilio Baez with 12 tables. Officials informed the team that the polls had opened on time. The situation in Simon Bolivar and Cecilio Baez differed markedly from the situation in Colonel Oviedo and San Jose.

Tensions ran high at the two sites the team members visited in Simon Bolivar. Colorado Party electoral officials were unpleasant and rude, and the pollwatchers appeared overwhelmed and nervous. The irregularities encountered by the team were widespread. They included the following:

- Three Colorado officials sat at all 10 of the tables visited by the team members in the two sites. (However, pollwatchers from three parties were present at most sites.) Table officials would not discuss with team members how they had been selected.

- Police officers with rifles stood next to some of the tables and were clearly an intimidating presence.
- The team members were told that a Colorado Party member pulled a gun on a member of the Authentic Radical Liberal Party. Apparently, an OAS observer witnessed the act and called the police to remove the gunslinger.
- At one voting table, officials would not allow a woman to vote who presented an I.D. that had only one letter missing from her last name. Authentic Radical Liberal Party and National Encounter site officials raised this issue with team members and asked for assistance. The team members told them they would note the incident. To determine the breath of this problem, the team members asked the presidents of some of the voting tables to state the criteria they used to determine voter eligibility. They were told that the name on a voter's I.D. had to match exactly the name on the voter registration list.
- When the team members began to ask questions at one voting table, a man came over and directed the voting table officials not to speak to anyone until after 10:30 a.m. He told the table officials that the team members did not have any right to question them. The gentleman refused to speak with the team members or identify himself. Opposition site officials told team members that the man was a Colorado official from Asunción.
- Site officials from the opposition also told the team members that some of the Colorado table officials were not signing the ballots, an act that would render them invalid during the count.
- A woman with a Colorado shirt was handing out free beer at one site.

While problems in Cecilio Baez differed from those found in Simon Bolivar, they too challenged citizens to freely exercise their right to vote.

Team members were stopped on the road to the site by an National Encounter official on his way to obtain help from his party headquarters. He reported that the Colorados were not permitting National Encounter supporters to vote. Team members investigated the allegation when they arrived, but did not find any specific evidence to support the claim.

As the team members approached the site, they noted buses and cars lining the road. Alongside the road, people sat at tables thumbing through copies of the voter registration list. The tables were surrounded by dozens of people, and the presence of alcoholic beverages was evident.

The team members thought they had reached the voting site and pulled over. However, they had instead encountered what was apparently a Colorado Party processing site. No one arrived at the actual voting site without first passing through this web of Colorado vehicles and representatives. The team members noted that the buses and the large number of well-dressed people did not appear to belong in this poor rural setting.

When team members arrived at the actual voting site, they observed a woman from the Colorado Party sitting by the entrance with a copy of the voter registration list. She said she was there to help direct people. When the team members asked if other parties were with her, a man in a red shirt told them he was with the National Encounter Movement. Since red is the color of the Colorado Party, the team members doubted his claim. They found out later that he was indeed a member of the Colorado Party. He also appeared at each of the tables visited by one of the team members.

Team members noted that the Colorado Party gubernatorial candidate was at the site for at least the same amount of time as the team members. It seemed a little suspicious that such a small, isolated site would receive so much high-level attention.

In general, the voting procedures were followed in Cecilio Baez. Election officials of at least two, usually three, parties were present at the voting tables. Pollwatchers from at least two parties were also present. However, the team was concerned that the Colorado Party members were using the voter registration lists to try to persuade voters to their side or to turn away voters by telling them that their names were not on the list.

The Vote Count

The team members observed the closing of the polls and the vote count in Colonel Oviedo. The polls closed at 5 p.m.

With the exception of a few instances when table workers and pollwatchers appeared somewhat confused about the vote counting procedure and about how to stack the ballots, no apparent irregularities surfaced during the count. Site officials from all of the parties were happy with the process. The Authentic Radical Liberal Party official confessed, however, that he believed his party would lose fairly.

Conclusion

The elections proceeded without a major incident in most places the team visited. Voter turnout was very high, as Paraguayans were excited about the opportunity to vote in these free elections.

However, the team believes that Sunday's electoral victory should not necessarily be viewed as a democratic victory for Paraguay.

The team believes that when the Colorado Party determined that the results in Asunción might be close, they expended a lot of effort and money on the smaller cities and rural areas. The party also appeared to employ particularly repressive tactics in poorer and more isolated rural areas. Their techniques for securing a victory varied. In some places, the Colorados totally controlled the voting tables. In other places, Colorado Party members controlled access to the voting site, and intercepted

voters and coached them on how to vote. If those techniques failed, more blatant intimidation efforts were employed.

In the case of Simon Bolivar, the irregularities were egregious. In Cecilio Baez, incidents of specific electoral irregularities were replaced by intimidation and the widespread exploitation of a poor and uneducated constituency; a politicized police force and judicial system; and relatively weak opposition parties.

In addition, the local electoral court comprised Colorado Party stalwarts who ensured that the majority of the decisions rendered by the tribunal favored the Colorado Party. When a decision did not favor the Colorado Party and members refused to abide by its decisions, the tribunal appeared to remain silent. For example, the tribunal ruled that the selection of the three table officials was to follow federal law, which states that two officials are to be appointed, one each from the Colorado Party and the Authentic Radical Liberal Party, and the third is to be selected by lottery. The team found minimal adherence to this ruling.

Election-Day Checklist for International Observers

Form to be filled out at each site

NDI/Council Observer Form: 1993 Paraguayan Elections

Name of observer: _____ Municipality: _____

Voting site name: _____ Time of day at site: ____

Number of tables at site: _____

Number of voters on list: _____

Number of votes cast so far: _____

1. Election officials: Were three election officials present at the tables visited? Yes/No

Which parties were represented as electoral officials?

ANR () PLRA () EN () Other ()

2. Pollwatchers: Were pollwatchers representing at least two parties present? Yes/No

Which parties? ANR () PLRA () EN () Other ()

3. Materials and Procedures: Were election materials (ballots, boxes, ink, *actas*, etc.) available in sufficient supply? Yes/No

Were polling procedures generally followed without significant problems? Yes/No

(Circle: name checked on list, ID checked, inking, privacy of ballot, intimidation, military presence, campaigning on site)

4. Were most voters able to find the correct site and to vote without problems? Yes/No

5. Overall: Was overall voting process satisfactory? Yes/No

Describe any major complaints:

Jimmy Carter estará el sábado en nuestro país

El sábado arribará a nuestra capital el ex presidente norteamericano Jimmy Carter para observar las elecciones generales que se desarrollarán el domingo, según confirmó Steven Griner, oficial de programas del Instituto Nacional Demócrata Para Asuntos Internacionales (NDI), organización encargada de la venida del ex mandatario.

Carter vendrá acompañado de varias personalidades, entre quienes se encuentran el ex presidente de Costa Rica, Rodrigo Carazo, y el senador canadiense, Al Graham. La delegación incluirá legisladores, líderes políticos y expertos electorales de 12 países de América, Europa y África. El NDI copatrocina la misión de observación junto con el consejo de jefes de gobierno libremente electos, presidido por Carter en el centro que lleva su nombre en la Universidad Emory de Atlanta, Georgia. El grupo estará en nuestro país hasta el martes de la próxima semana, de acuerdo a lo que informaron. El pedido para que el ex mandatario estadounidense venga al país fue suscrito por los tres principales candidatos presidenciales, Domingo Laino, Guilermo Caballero Vargas y

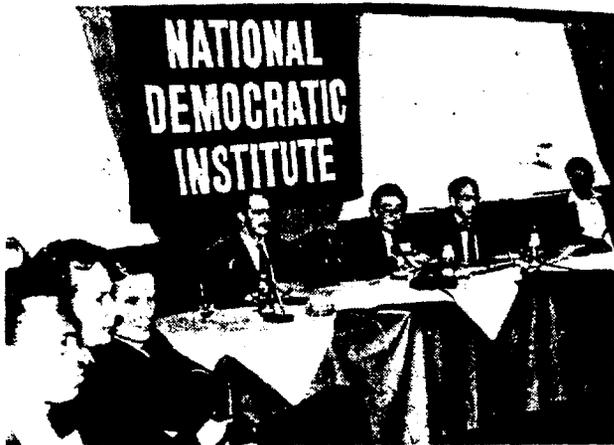
Acompañado de numerosas personalidades

Juan Carlos Wasmosy. Los mismos manifestaron que las elecciones constituyen el paso más importante hacia la consolidación de la democracia en el Paraguay. La presencia de Carter se suma a la de otras varias figuras políticas internacionales que estarán presenciando las votaciones generales. Entre ellas se encuentran el secretario general de la Organización de Estados Americanos (OEA), João Clemente Baena Soares; integrantes del Parlamento Europeo y dirigentes de países vecinos.

HUESPED ILUSTRE

A través de una nota remitida por el intendente de Asunción, Carlos Filizzola, a la Junta Municipal, el jefe comunal solicita a dicha corporación que declare "Huésped Ilustre de la Ciudad de Asunción" al ex presidente de los Estados Unidos, James Carter, quien llegará este sábado a nuestro país para participar como observador internacional de las elecciones nacionales. Al mismo tiempo, se quiere aprovechar la oportunidad para hacerle entrega de la llave de oro de la ciudad.

Confían en que no manipularán comicios



Durante la conferencia de prensa, los integrantes del Instituto Nacional Demócrata manifestaron su confianza en la transparencia de las elecciones.

En una conferencia de prensa realizada ayer en el Hotel Excelsior, fueron presentados oficialmente los integrantes de la misión de observadores del Instituto Nacional Demócrata para Asuntos Internacionales (NDI). El senador canadiense Al Graham, co-dirigente del organismo, manifestó que habían venido para participar de un acontecimiento histórico.

Graham aclaró que la delegación no estaba para interferir en los asuntos internos del Paraguay.

"Estamos aquí, invitados por los candidatos presidenciales paraguayos, para demostrar el apoyo internacional al proceso democrático y para compartir nuestras impresiones con la comunidad internacional", expresó.

El delegado manifestó su confianza en que las elecciones se desarrollarán con normalidad y transparencia. Graham indicó que a pesar de que habían surgido algunas preocupaciones referentes al proceso electoral, estaban seguros de que mediante el control activo del proceso por parte de los paraguayos, apoyados por los observadores, garantizarían la detección de cualquier intento de manipular el proceso.

Integran la delegación importantes personalidades internacionales, como ex jefes de Estados, legisladores, dirigentes de partidos políticos, expertos en el proceso electoral y líderes cívicos.

Entre estos se destaca el ex presidente estadounidense Jimmy Carter, Rodrigo Carazo, ex jefe de Gobierno de Costa Rica, y Timothy Towell, ex embajador de los Estados Unidos en Paraguay, además de otras personalidades de Argentina, Brasil, Canadá, Chile, Costa Rica, Guyana, Honduras, Francia, Malawi, México, Panamá, Perú, Rusia, Sudáfrica y los Estados Unidos.

Entre las actividades que tiene prevista la misión, están varios encuentros con candidatos presidenciales, oficiales militares, líderes cívicos, miembros de la Junta Electoral Central y del Tribunal Electoral de la Capital.



NDI fiscalizará caso paraguayo

La delegación completa del Instituto Demócrata Nacional (NDI) convocó una conferencia de prensa para anunciar la venida del ex presidente Jimmy Carter y las reuniones que éste mantendrá con personalidades paraguayas.

La reunión estuvo presidida por el copresidente de la delegación, el senador canadiense Al Graham, quien prefirió hablar de su experiencia anterior en las elecciones de 1989 y 1991 con casos de irregularidades que no llegaron a constituir fraude.

En la mesa directiva estuvieron también el miembro del NDI Mark Feienstein y el Sr. Bob Pastor, quien luego de la conferencia de prensa indicó que en su experiencia haitiana, Jean Bertrand Aristide le había dicho a media mañana: "me están robando las elecciones", pero que la realidad fue otra y él fue el ganador. De ello se desprende que los latinoamericanos hablan de fraude con una cierta ligereza. De todos modos, Pastor aseguró que los observadores son capaces de detectar los fraudes cuando ocurran.

El informe sobre las elecciones que publicó el NDI tiene párrafos muy interesantes sobre el Paraguay: "La dirigencia militar no parece temer tanto a la oposición como a Argaña. De los tres candidatos presidenciales, posiblemente Laíno representa la amenaza más clara... La mayoría de los analistas concuerda en que los militares aceptarían el liderazgo de Guillermo Caballero Vargas como comandante en jefe. Su movimiento incluye a conservadores y colorados que son conscientes de las necesidades de los militares. Caballero Vargas ha sido miembro del establishment paraguayo por varios años. Fue un exitoso empresario durante los años de Stroessner y tiene relaciones cercanas con jefes militares que eran, y siguen siendo, líderes en industrias claves del país".

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El ex presidente de EE.UU. avaló coincidencias entre los candidatos

Jimmy Carter almorzó ayer con los tres principales candidatos, Guillermo Caballero Vargas, Domingo Laíno, Juan Carlos Wasmosy, avalando coincidencias de los tres. "Los tres candidatos dijeron que van a apoyar plenamente el resultado, cualquiera fuere el ganador. Esto, obviamente, incluye cualquier rechazo a interferencia de los militares en el proceso democrático", en primer lugar.

"Otra declaración muy clara de los candidatos es un llamado para la calma a todos los que les apoyen en cuanto se cierren las elecciones". También, según dijo, los tres candidatos reconocen que va a ser muy difícil gobernar en un Congreso si es que no hay un acercamiento y un trabajo en conjunto de los tres partidos mayoritarios.

Asimismo, Carter dijo que los tres también están completamente de acuerdo en que es necesario que cooperen y trabajen en conjunto "en este periodo tan especial de la transición hasta el momento que asuma el poder el 15 de agosto el presidente electo, y se han comprometido a trabajar juntos en este periodo".

"RENUNCIAR DEFINITIVAMENTE AL RESPALDO DE LAS FUERZAS ARMADAS"

Por su parte, Caballero Vargas expresó: "El compromiso entre quienes hoy cotejamos supremacías electorales es el de respetar y hacer respetar los resultados electorales de los comicios de hoy, el de colaborar en hacer una transi-

ción de poder que nos permita arribar a la consolidación democrática sin mayores turbulencias y a renunciar definitivamente al respaldo de las Fuerzas Armadas para cualquier tipo de consolidación de este proceso".

Laíno, por su lado, instó a "todos aquellos caudillos de la capital y del interior que mantengamos el equilibrio, que tratemos de cerrar este capítulo electoral con altura, con civismo, como un país civilizado. Que ninguna acción, ningún gesto, empañe este proceso democrático que todos juntos estamos empeñados en consolidar".

Wasmosy resaltó el compromiso de consolidar la democracia en nuestro país, manifestando, al igual que los otros candidatos, su agradecimiento a Jimmy Carter por participar en la histórica jornada vivida ayer por nuestro país.



■ OBSERVADORES ESPERAN CONOCER RESULTADOS EN EL TRANCURSO DE LA FECHA

"Interferencias de SAKA no fueron hecho accidental"

- JIMMY CARTER DIJO QUE ES PREMATURO QUE UN CANDIDATO PROCLAME VICTORIA
- CALIFICO COMO VIOLACION DE DERECHOS HUMANOS CIERRE DE FRONTERAS

El ex presidente de los Estados Unidos, Jimmy Carter, afirmó que las interferencias que sufrieron las líneas telefónicas de la organización para la transparencia en los comicios, SAKA, organización encargada de realizar el conteo paralelo de votos, "no fue un hecho accidental".

El norteamericano que llegó a nuestro país para observar el desarrollo de los comicios presidenciales, de este modo dejó entrever que el hecho fue un "boicot", pues a pesar de haber intervenido para solucionar el problema, no hubo forma de reponer las comunicaciones.

Al mencionar esto, Carter expresó su preocupación por la tarea, casi imposible, de conseguir los resultados de todo el país, puesto que los de la JEC solamente hacen referencia a un ínfimo porcentaje.

Al mismo tiempo recordó,

que la organización SAKA estaba preparada para dar los resultados pocas horas después del cierre de los comicios. Pero las líneas telefónicas habilitadas para el efecto hace una semana, fueron cortadas.

Comentó que al enterarse de este hecho, personalmente, visitó al presidente Rodríguez alrededor de las 14:00 horas. "Hasta ahora, cuando son las 00:00, estas líneas todavía no han sido reconectadas".

Continuó diciendo, "no tengo ninguna idea de lo que pueden ser los resultados de las elecciones. En mi opinión, es demasiado pronto para que cualquier candidato o partido diga que tiene la victoria. Creo que es mejor que los observadores internacionales espereamos hasta que podamos tener resultados exactos, oficiales o no oficiales".

El ex mandatario estadounidense expresó su confianza en que esta mañana ya se tendrán los resultados de la JEC y que la exactitud de los mismos sean confirmados por los de SAKA, para luego escuchar a los demás observadores en sus apreciaciones sobre las votaciones.

Antes de todo esto, Carter afirmó que "el propósito de los

observadores internacionales, es hacer un juicio sobre los resultados finales. Personalmente he visitado muchas mesas en Asunción y he visto que la forma en que se manejaban las cosas estaban excelentes. Sin embargo, otros observadores aún no han hecho sus informes. Hemos escuchado de algunas irregularidades aparentes, pero no sabemos cuán serias son", apuntó.

Durante la rueda de prensa que dio a medianoche en el hotel Guarani, Carter se mostró muy conforme con el grado de civismo demostrado por el pueblo durante las justas.

• Cierre de frontera

Con relación al cierre de fronteras a los paraguayos residentes en la Argentina, que regresaron con intenciones de votar, el ex mandatario consideró que ello atenta contra las leyes de nuestro país y los derechos humanos.

Sobre este punto, expresó que el Gobierno cometió una abierta violación de los derechos humanos, al prohibir que los compatriotas interesados en votar entraran al país, al tiempo de no querer opinar sobre las consecuencias.



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