

**VOTING FOR GREATER
PLURALISM:
THE MAY 26
1991
MUNICIPAL
ELECTIONS IN
PARAGUAY**

**NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC
INSTITUTE FOR
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**International Observer Delegation
to the Paraguay Elections**

May 26, 1991

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This is the report of a 16-member international delegation that observed the May 26, 1991 Paraguayan municipal elections. The report was prepared under the auspices of the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI). While the conclusions reached herein represent a consensus of the delegation, NDI assumes full responsibility for the accuracy of the report.

The report was written by NDI Program Officer for Latin America Mark Feierstein, Program Officer Donna Huffman and Special Assistant Steven Griner. The team reports were prepared by delegation members and NDI staff. The report was edited by NDI Executive Vice President Kenneth Wollack, Senior Consultant Larry Garber and Public Information Director Sue Grabowski. NDI staff member Suzy George provided assistance in organizing the delegation and its activities.

NDI thanks the participants in the observer delegation and others who have visited Paraguay on behalf of the Institute. NDI also thanks the many Paraguayans who took time from their busy schedules before and after the elections to share their perspectives on the electoral process.

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Development. The Institute is appreciative of USAID's support for this effort.

Foreword

Senator B.A. Graham

I was honored to serve as co-leader of the National Democratic Institute international observer delegation to the Paraguayan municipal elections on May 26, 1991. These municipal elections represented a significant event in the history of Paraguay: for the first time ever, mayors were elected by the people. Co-leading this delegation afforded me the opportunity to witness the progress Paraguayans have made in creating a free and democratic society.

Now, as two years ago, I was particularly struck by the enthusiasm of the Paraguayan people and their willingness to work together to promote a lasting democracy in their country. After so many years of dictatorial rule, their efforts are truly inspiring.

The members of the delegation are optimistic about the prospects for democracy in Paraguay. Significant progress has been made since February 1989. During the recent campaign, the candidates and the press freely debated the future of their country with minimal fear of reprisal.

To be sure, there were difficulties, primarily in the administration of the elections. Irregularities in the voter registries prohibited many people from voting. On election day, voters in many cities, including Asunción, spent hours searching for their appointed voting area. In some areas, the late delivery of supplies forced polls

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to open late; in other areas, the elections were suspended outright. The delegation acknowledges the daunting challenges in creating a well-organized, transparent electoral process. It wishes to contribute toward these ends in this report by providing a realistic assessment of the electoral process in Paraguay.

I want to thank my co-leaders — Andrés Pastrana of Colombia and Bruce Morrison of the United States — for their hard work in this endeavor. I also want to thank the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, whose efforts before, during and after the elections have made an important contribution to the democratization process in Paraguay. Last, and most important, I would like to extend my gratitude to the many Paraguayans who were most hospitable and who shared with us their perspectives and insights into the democratic transition of their country.

Executive Summary

The National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) organized a 16-member delegation to observe the May 26, 1991, municipal elections in Paraguay. Although Paraguayans had elected their city council members in the past, these were the first mayoral elections in Paraguay's history.

NDI has been involved in Paraguay since 1988 when it began supporting a civic education institute, the Center for Democratic Studies (CED). The following year, NDI organized a 19-member observer delegation to the May 1, 1989, presidential elections.

The following are the delegation's conclusions about the 1991 electoral process.

1. Paraguayans responded enthusiastically to the opportunity to elect their mayors. Political parties and independent movements organized throughout the country to campaign and monitor the elections. Civic organizations were also active, encouraging people to vote, distributing information concerning the electoral process and the candidates, organizing civic education programs and conducting independent vote counts.

2. During the campaign, no restrictions were placed on the ability of political parties to operate. A vigorous and responsible press also contributed to the process by reporting about all aspects of the elections.

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3. Voter turnout was high. In the face of frequent confusion, voters went to great lengths to exercise their right to vote. According to the electoral board, 72 percent of registered voters in Asunción cast ballots, while in the interior nearly 80 percent of registered voters went to the polls. The NDI delegates observed a festive atmosphere and a high degree of cooperation among the parties and electoral officials.

4. Shortcomings existed in the administrative preparations for the elections. These were most evident on election day, which was marked by confusion and chaos in many areas. In 14 municipalities, elections were suspended because voting lists or materials did not arrive in time or did not arrive at all. As a result, some voters became discouraged and left before the balloting began. On election day, elections in 15 other municipalities were suspended due to various administrative problems.

5. The political parties believe that the irregularities were mostly administrative in nature and were not engineered to favor or disadvantage a particular candidate or party. Given the large number of opposition victories, especially in Asunción, the election results would appear to discredit any charges that the irregularities were politically motivated by the ruling Colorado Party.

6. The delegation heard allegations of irregularities such as the purchase and alteration of identification cards, instances of people voting in areas where they did not reside and the existence of pre-marked ballots. The delegation did not witness these practices. Their effect on the process, if they did occur, is believed to have been marginal.

7. Paraguay's local governments are now representative of the country's political spectrum. The newly elected city councils will provide forums to democratically debate and determine public policies. The electoral results and their acceptance by political parties demonstrate that Paraguayans are committed to the democratic process.

8. The political dominance of the Colorado Party is no longer assured. The election of Carlos Filizzola, a left-of-center independent candidate, as mayor of Asunción and the many victories of the Liberal Party have convinced voters that change through the ballot box is possible and that the Colorado Party is willing to yield power.

9. Voter education programs are still needed in Paraguay. Many voters were unfamiliar with the balloting process, making voting a frustrating, and sometimes futile, experience.

Introduction

On May 26, 1991, the citizens of Paraguay participated in municipal elections, which included the first direct election of mayors in the country's history. Aside from representing an important indicator of democratic progress since the overthrow of Gen. Alfredo Stroessner in 1989, these elections in many respects represented the first free and fair electoral process in the history of Paraguay. A new electoral law was enacted and a new electoral registry compiled. Political parties freely organized and campaigned, and the media was free and representative of the political spectrum. Moreover, in contrast to the 1989 presidential elections, political parties were better prepared to monitor the process.

The ruling Colorado Party won the majority of mayoral races, 154 of 206 elections. The largest defeat for the Colorados, however, occurred in Asunción with the victory of independent candidate, Dr. Carlos Filizzola. Six other independent candidates won in the interior, but according to electoral officials, four of these were actually former Colorado Party members. Forty-two of the newly elected mayors are from the Authentic Radical Liberal Party. These elections were suspended indefinitely.

The municipal elections were the first of three elections (a Constituent Assembly was chosen on December 1, 1991 and presidential elections are scheduled for 1993) that are critical for

Paraguay's ongoing transition to democracy. Most people believed that if these elections went smoothly, it would augur well for the next steps in the transition. By contrast, controversial elections would have likely bred mistrust and escalated confrontation between the government and the opposition. As President Andrés Rodríguez's chief of staff noted, opposition victories would convince the public that political change is possible through the ballot box.

The people of Paraguay, through their willingness and determination to participate in the process, ensured the success of the elections. Although administrative difficulties forced the suspension of elections in certain municipalities, all but three elections were eventually held, and Paraguay's local governments are now representative of the country's broad political spectrum.

The NDI monitoring effort was part of a larger undertaking initiated by the international community to support Paraguay's quest for democracy. Opposition party leaders, while anticipating little more than sporadic irregularities, hoped that the presence of international observers would reduce the likelihood of fraud. The opposition, therefore, successfully encouraged the government to invite the Organization of American States (OAS) to observe the entire process. The OAS arrived in Paraguay in March and investigated allegations of irregularities and intimidation in Asunción and the interior. By election day, the mission fielded 47 observers throughout the country. The government also welcomed other observers in an effort to demonstrate the democratic progress made by the country since 1989.

This report assesses the 1991 municipal elections. It begins with a description of NDI's activities in Paraguay since 1988. Chapters two and three present a brief geographical, economic and historical overview. Chapter four examines the principal actors in the electoral process: the political parties, the military and civic organizations. Chapter five discusses the electoral framework for the elections and assesses the mechanics of the electoral process. Chapters six and seven review developments during the preceding week of elections and election-day activities. Chapter eight presents some reflections on the Paraguayan electoral process.

Chapter 1

NDI Activities in Paraguay

A. NDI Activities 1988-91

NDI has been actively working in Paraguay since 1988. An NDI survey mission visited Paraguay at the time of the February 1988 presidential elections to explore possible democratic development programs. Civic leaders asked NDI to help establish a nonpartisan institute that would promote civic education and political development.

The following month, NDI invited to Washington Aldo Zuccolillo, the publisher of *ABC Color*, an independent paper closed four years earlier by the government. Zuccolillo discussed with NDI specific programs for the new Paraguayan institute.

In August, the Asunción-based Center for Democratic Studies (CED) was established with NDI support to assist political leaders and parties to press the 34-year-old Stroessner regime for democratic reforms. The board included Zuccolillo and leaders of the most

important opposition parties, as well as democratic opponents of Stroessner within the ruling Colorado Party.

In September 1988, the CED and NDI sponsored the visit of four Paraguayan youth leaders to Santiago, Chile for a seminar that examined the successful civic education programs developed for the Chilean presidential plebiscite. After the February 2, 1989 coup in Paraguay, NDI sponsored the visit to Asunción of two Chileans who had played leading roles in the plebiscite campaign. They helped the CED develop civic- and voter-education programs and election monitoring activities for the upcoming national elections. From February to May 1989, a second grant from NDI enabled the CED to concentrate on training pollwatchers, carrying out a mass media campaign to encourage voter registration and participation, conducting a public opinion survey and designing an independent vote count.

For the May 1, 1989 presidential elections, NDI organized a 19-member international delegation led by Canadian Senator B.A. Graham, Chilean political leader Eduardo Frei and U.S. Representative Bruce Morrison. The delegation included legislators, leaders of political parties, election experts and representatives of public policy institutes from Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Sweden, Uruguay and the United States. NDI published a 68-page election report based on the delegation's findings.

In 1990, NDI provided the CED with a third grant to enable the Center to conduct nearly 200 seminars and 13 panel debates designed to increase understanding of and participation in the municipal elections. The seminars, which were held throughout the country, dealt with issues such as local government affairs and electoral systems. Panel participants also discussed such topics as political party platforms, the role of the Paraguayan military and political ethics.

With its fourth grant from NDI, the CED trained political party pollwatchers for the 1991 municipal elections and conducted a public opinion survey. With a core group of 13 teachers, the CED trained about 600 instructors who, in turn, conducted seminars in the capital and throughout the interior of Paraguay. By election day, nearly 12,000 people, representing all the major political parties, had been trained as pollwatchers.

The public opinion survey, which involved interviews with a sample of 1,730 potential voters, tested understanding of the electoral

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process as well as general attitudes toward the democratic process. Questions covered issues such as the registration and balloting processes and civic education programs.

The results of the survey indicated that the vast majority of the populace (85 percent) intended to participate in the elections, although many were skeptical of the ability of electoral officials to conduct fair elections. More than 45 percent of the respondents believed there would be some or many irregularities in the May 26 elections. Skepticism was not limited to the electoral bodies. In another survey, conducted by a consortium of nongovernmental organizations, 20 percent of the respondents affiliated with the Liberal Party (PLRA) and 25 percent from the Colorado Party suggested that they could be persuaded to vote for a candidate outside of their party.

The survey also indicated widespread ignorance of election-day procedures. Many respondents did not know the appropriate identification they were required to bring to the polling site, and an almost equal amount were unfamiliar with the ballots and how they should be marked.

The results of this survey were broadcast on a local television program, *Reto Municipal*, and were also aired by the same television channel during its election-day analyses. The survey is being used by the CED to formulate new projects in civic education. [See Appendix I for a sample of the CED poll results.]

In response to a request from the CED, two NDI staff members visited Paraguay in March 1991 to determine whether NDI should send a delegation to observe the elections. The NDI delegates were well-received by the government, major political parties and the Central Electoral Board. Everyone welcomed the idea of an observer delegation. [See Appendix II for Press Coverage of March, 1991 NDI visit.]

Based on the findings of that visit, NDI sent a four-member team to Paraguay in mid-April to gather additional information on the electoral process and to prepare for an international observation mission for the May elections. The group met with leaders of the major political parties, government officials and members of the Central Electoral Tribunal. Interviews were conducted in Asunción and municipalities in the interior.

B. The International Observer Delegation

Sixteen individuals from seven countries – Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guyana, Mexico, Nicaragua and the United States – participated in the delegation. Senator B.A. Graham of Canada, former Mayor Andrés Pastrana of Colombia and former U.S. Representative Bruce Morrison of the United States served as co-leaders of the delegation. Members of the delegation represented a wide spectrum of democratic tendencies; the U.S. component was bipartisan.

The delegation arrived in Asunción on Thursday, May 23. On Friday, NDI staff briefed the delegation on the role of observers. [See Appendix III for Terms of Reference]. Briefings on the electoral process were then conducted by election officials, candidates, political party leaders and civic leaders. [See Appendix IV for Delegation's Schedule.] That afternoon, the delegation held a press conference. [See Appendix V for Pre-Election Statement.] On Saturday, the delegation divided into five teams and dispersed throughout the country. [See Appendix VI for Team Deployments.] Before the elections, each team met with local officials, politicians, electoral officials, candidates and representatives of other election-related organizations and monitoring groups in their respective region. [See Appendix VII for Team Reports.]

On election day, members of the delegation observed balloting in nine municipalities. Delegation members monitored the count at the local polling stations in six of these municipalities.

The delegation reassembled in Asunción on Monday, and after a debriefing session, issued a preliminary assessment of the electoral process and held a press conference for Paraguayan and foreign media. [See Appendix VIII for the Press Statement and Appendix IX for Press Coverage of NDI Delegation.] That same day, the delegation also met with President Andrés Rodríguez.

Chapter 2

Geography, Demography and the Economy

Paraguay is a land-locked, semitropical 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 19 departments and 206 municipalities.

The population is 95 percent *mestizo*, a combination of Spanish and Indian origin. Indians compose 1 to 3 percent of the population

and are the poorest sector of Paraguayan society.¹ Recent immigration, however, has brought settlers from all parts of the world. The extremely arid Chaco region, bordering Bolivia, contains about 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.² 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 less active 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. Paraguay is expected to become one of the world's leading exporters of electricity in the near future, a result of the massive Itaipú dam constructed jointly by Paraguay and Brazil.

¹ Riordan Roett and Richard Scott Sacks, *Paraguay: The Personalist Legacy* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991), p. 99.

² *Ibid.*, p. 85.

Chapter 3

Historical Background

A. Early Paraguayan History

Long before 1811, when Paraguay became South America's first independent country, the 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 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 leading 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. When 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. Pre-Stroessner Era

Unlike the war against the Triple Alliance, the Chaco War against Bolivia from 1932-35 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 in Paraguay 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 1937-54, 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. With the help of a few poor and underequipped peasant militias, he defended Asunción and defeated the rebels only eight months after the war began.

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 also gained notoriety for harboring Nazis and exiled dictators. The most famous of these included Joseph Mengele, the Auschwitz concentration camp doctor known as the "Angel of Death," and Anastasio Somoza, the Nicaraguan dictator overthrown by revolutionary forces 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 construction with Brazil 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.³ 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 during the six-year construction period. Contraband also added to the fortunes of the country, although much 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 loyalty of the Colorado Party was also challenged by the emergence of factions that opposed Stroessner's personalist rule. While the supporters of Stroessner prevailed in the Colorado Party convention in 1987 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

³ *Ibid*, p. 71.

dissident faction — was organized to challenge Stroessner from outside the Colorado Party.

As internal strife grew within the Colorado Party, resentment developed in the armed forces over forced 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, to 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 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 Paraguay for exile in Brazil.

E. Rodríguez and the Transition to Democracy

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. In anticipation of the elections, political parties organized and campaigned freely. Still, the Colorados enjoyed significant advantages as a result of their long tenure in office and the short campaign period.

On election day in 1989, observers witnessed serious irregularities in the balloting process. Notwithstanding the problems, Paraguayans accepted the results as expressing the will of the electorate. Rodríguez won the presidency as expected and will complete the unfinished term of Stroessner.

Critics, however, remained doubtful about Rodríguez's commitment to democracy. Until nearly the day of the coup, Rodríguez had been a close associate of Stroessner. The privilege of that position made him one of the wealthiest men in Paraguay with

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assets estimated at over \$1 billion.⁴ Although he opposed the most authoritarian factions in the Colorado Party, he did not fully support that wing of the party pressing for a rapid and full transition toward democracy.

Since taking power in 1989, Rodríguez has pledged to relinquish the government when his term expires in 1993. Recently, however, there has been a call for the president's re-election in 1993. Rodríguez has remained noncommittal, reiterating that he has been loyal to his commitment up to now. He does not discount re-election, however, responding to one reporter, "I deeply appreciate that at least someone believes I may accept another term in office."⁵ Others in the Colorado Party, notably Minister of Education and a Colorado faction leader Angel Seifart, have not completely rejected the idea either.

⁴ *Ibid*, p. 133.

⁵ "Rodríguez on Elections; Minister on Reshuffle," Asunción RPC Television Network, May 23, 1991 in FBIS-LAT-91-100, p. 27.

Chapter 4

Political Forces

A. Background

In the 1989 presidential elections, the two leading parties — the ruling Colorado Party and the Authentic Radical Liberal Party (PLRA) — together received 94 percent of the vote. In 1991, the PLRA and the Colorados presented candidates in every contest, while the Febrerista Party ran candidates in 35 municipalities. Three other political parties also registered for the municipal elections. Due in part to disillusionment with the existing party system, the two leading parties received an estimated 63 percent of the total vote in 1991.

The primary challenge to the traditional two-party system was a proliferation of independent candidates throughout the country. Some movements, such as the Asunción For All Movement led by Carlos Filizzola, a 31-year-old physician and union leader, were genuinely independent of any previous party affiliation. Other independent candidates, however, were merely the losers of the Colorado primaries. Since an independent candidate must not have participated, either as a candidate or a voter, in any party primary, the legality of some of the latter candidacies was challenged by other

party members. Of the approximately 60 independent candidacies challenged in Asunción, only a handful were disqualified by the Central Electoral Tribunal according to Dr. Carlos Moljoli, president of the Tribunal.

Colorado and PLRA leaders rejected the suggestion that third parties or independent candidates could challenge the two parties' historic monopoly of the electorate. PLRA and Colorado leaders noted that party affiliation in Paraguay is inherited at birth and passed on to one's descendants. Others, however, believed that Paraguayans had become more politically sophisticated and would base their voting decisions on factors other than familial allegiances. While independent victories in the interior were few, the election of Filizzola in Asunción validates, to some extent, this view.

B. Parties

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

The Colorado Party was founded in 1887. While supporting Stroessner for 34 years, the party retained its cohesiveness, often by brutal means. During the last days of the Stroessner regime, however, unity began to dissolve over the issue of succession. Since the most ardent supporters of Stroessner were arrested or exiled after the 1989 coup, the balance of power has shifted to those who opposed Stroessner during his final days.

As the only legitimate party to have operated for more than three decades, the Colorado Party holds vast financial and organizational advantages over the other parties. The opposition claims that the party still receives obligatory contributions from state employees.

Since Stroessner's departure, the party has been fraught with infighting among many tendencies. One analyst has characterized the divisions as the "Lebanonization" of the party, and many Colorado members attribute current internal strife to the disappointing showing in the municipal elections.

Although the Colorado Party is divided into many factions and subfactions, none with a majority, two groups hold the most influence. The Tradicionalismo Renovador y Democrático faction is led by Minister of Education Angel Roberto Seifart and considers

itself the democratic option. Even though Seifart stresses reform and democratization for the party as well as the country, many people inside and outside the party accused him of pressuring teachers to support his faction during the elections.

Rivaling Seifart's faction is the Tradicionalismo Autónomo faction, led by former Foreign Minister and current party president Luís Argaña. Colorados opposed to Argaña question his democratic convictions. In July 1990, while serving as foreign minister, he said he was prepared to organize a coup to prevent the Colorado Party from losing power. President Rodríguez fired Argaña for that statement and opposes his control of the party.

While some factions claim to be more reformist than others, leadership style more than ideology distinguishes one group from another. No faction publicly advocates returning to the politics under the dictatorship where candidates were hand-picked and their election victories assured. Although not without difficulties, the Colorado Party chose its candidates for the municipal elections by popular vote of its members [see pp. 27-29 for report on the Colorado Party primaries], and the new party leadership will apparently be chosen in this manner as well. (Such a vote is scheduled for February 1992.)

Other smaller factions of the Colorado Party include the Alianza Democrática, comprised of previously exiled Colorado members, and the Tradicionalismo Democrático, a new faction with considerable economic resources.

The Colorado Party's mayoral candidate in Asunción, José Manuel Morales did not claim allegiance to any particular faction, although the majority of mayoral candidates throughout the country were aligned with Seifart's Renovador faction. Seifart is the leading contender for the Colorado Party presidential nomination in 1993.

The Colorado Party dominated the elections, winning 154 of 206, or nearly 75 percent of all municipalities. The Colorado Party's showing, however, was weaker than expected. Most Colorado victories were in sparsely populated rural areas; in municipalities of less than 3,000 people, the Colorados won 56 percent of the overall

vote.⁶ In urban areas of more than 8,000 inhabitants, the Colorado vote plummeted to 36 percent.⁷

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

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

The PLRA, affiliated with the Liberal International, is the largest opposition party in Paraguay, but is 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 elections. While the party won a substantial number of votes in 1989, its campaign was limited and it was unable to train a sufficient number of pollwatchers to cover the entire country. Two years later in the 1991 municipal elections, at least one PLRA pollwatcher was present at each polling station.

Due to the disparity of resources between the parties, few expected the PLRA to garner more votes nationwide than the Colorado Party in the 1991 municipal elections. The PLRA won 42 of the 206 municipalities, or slightly more than 20 percent of the mayoral posts. Included among these municipalities are Pedro Juan Caballero and Colonel Oviedo.

The PLRA mayoral candidate in Asunción, Felix Bogado Gondra, finished third in the elections with 20 percent of the vote.

3. February Revolutionary Party (Partido Revolucionario Febrerista - PRF)

The Febrerista Party was named after the February 1936 Revolution in which disillusioned veterans of the Chaco War overthrew the Liberal administration of Eusebio Ayala. The period between 1936 and 1937 is the only time the Febreristas have

⁶ *Analysis del Mes*, BASE-Ecta, May, 1991, page 9.

⁷ *Ibid.*

governed Paraguay. During the Stroessner dictatorship, the Febreristas considered themselves the true opposition, refusing to collaborate with the Stroessner regime. Unlike the PLRA, the Febrerista Party boycotted all local and national elections from 1968 through 1988 despite remaining a legal political organization. The party advocates social and agrarian reform and is affiliated with the Socialist International.

By virtue of its limited size, the Febrerista Party only managed to run mayoral campaigns in about 20 percent of the municipalities. During the campaign, the Febrerista Party called for a postponement of the elections unless the Central Electoral Board could guarantee honest elections throughout the country. Since many voters were unable to vote on election day, the Febrerista Party joined other smaller opposition parties the following day in presenting a formal resolution rejecting the final results of the elections and calling for new elections to be held as soon as possible. The PLRA and Filizzola's independent movement did not support this resolution. While the pre-election complaints received a great deal of publicity, the complaint filed after the elections was not given much attention probably due to the opposition victory in Asunción.

In 1991, no Febrerista candidate won a mayoral race. The Febrerista mayoral candidate in Asunción, Euclides Acevedo, fell precipitously in the polls during the final days before the elections and eventually finished in fourth place with 10 percent of the vote.

4. Independent Movements

The most successful independent movement was the Asunción Movement for All (Asunción Movimiento Para Todos), which was created to support the candidacy of physician and union leader Carlos Filizzola. Although Filizzola is the leader of the Central Unitary of Workers Union (CUT), he was not considered a labor candidate. Before registering as a candidate, Filizzola resigned his position as the leader of CUT, and many of his advisors — intellectuals and members of nongovernmental organizations — were not involved in union activity.⁸

⁸ The most visible example was Filizzola's campaign manager, Ricardo Canesse, an engineer who was previously director of the nongovernmental organization Base Ecta and author of numerous books and articles dealing

Many analysts predict independent movements to flourish in the near future given the newfound freedom of expression and the growing belief that the established political parties no longer represent the views of the population, especially among the youth.

Filizzola won the mayor's race in Asunción with 34 percent of the vote. Including Filizzola, only six independent candidates won mayoral races. Of these, a high official of the Central Electoral Board said, four were recently affiliated with the Colorado Party.

C. Military

In contrast to the military in most other Latin American countries, the military in Paraguay is identified closely with a political party, the Colorados. The military leadership has supported the transition to democracy and, as expected, did not interfere with the municipal elections.

According to the secretary general of the Latin American Human Rights Association based in Santiago, Chile, "the [Paraguayan] armed forces are gradually returning to their own duties within a democratic system and they are subordinate to the government."⁹ Regarding the role of the armed forces, a report by the human rights association notes that the "[Paraguayan] process is exempt from the traumas and tensions that have characterized other processes in the Southern Cone".¹⁰

While President Rodríguez has made it clear that military officers are prohibited from participating in political debates, he admits that "no one can stop the military from having a political ideology, or from supporting the political party they like best."¹¹

Still, some in Paraguay contend that the military claim the right to exercise tutelage over Paraguay's transition to democracy. In

with energy issues.

⁹ "Human Rights Report Praises Political Transition," *Asunción HOY*, April 13, 1991 in FBIS-LAT-91-072, April 15, 1991, p. 37.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ "Rodríguez on Military Involvement in Politics," *Asunción HOY*, December 11, 1990 in FBIS-LAT-90-240, December 13, 1990, p. 27.

1990, two generals on active service attended Colorado Party gatherings, thereby ignoring the new electoral code's prohibition against members of the armed forces engaging in politically partisan activity. When the opposition criticized the generals, the army high command publicly endorsed the generals' behavior.¹²

There is an older group of generals who consider themselves Colorados and do not want to separate the military from the party. One political analyst told NDI that others are willing to depoliticize the military but are reluctant to cede control to civilians for fear of losing their impunity in such illicit businesses as smuggling and drug trafficking. A separation of the military and the party is likely, but effective civilian control will be more difficult to achieve.

D. Civic Organizations

In addition to the previously mentioned NDI-supported programs conducted by the Center for Democratic Studies, the CED also worked in conjunction with the Paraguayan Center for Sociological Studies to conduct a training program for the presidents of the individual polling sites. With a core group of 30 instructors, the two centers trained 13,000 polling officials throughout the country. The program was sponsored by the Central Electoral Board and was the only officially recognized program of its kind.

Decidamos, a consortium of 12 nongovernmental organizations founded in 1989, sponsored a 10-month civic-education program to instruct citizens on the role and functions of local governments. A total of 652 seminars were conducted, reaching more than 10,000 people. The seminars were presented to nonpartisan groups, such as church organizations, neighborhood committees, student and women's associations, as well as to private citizens. Decidamos also produced training materials and manuals that explained in simple terms the responsibilities of pollwatchers and other electoral officials.

¹² "Rodríguez sets limits on democracy," *Latin American Weekly Report*, February 21, 1991, p. 4.

Chapter 5

Electoral Framework

For the first time in their history, Paraguayans elected mayors and city council members for each of the country's 206 municipalities. Previously, mayors and council members had been designated by the Ministry of Interior. City councils are accorded 24, 12 or nine members according to a formula based on population.

Municipal governments in Paraguay, as in the rest of Latin America, are politically weak. In Paraguay, municipal governments keep only 30 percent of property taxes in contrast to 100 percent in some countries. The Constituent Assembly is likely to consider proposals that would allocate a greater percentage of property taxes to local governments.

In accordance with the constitution, all political parties held primaries. Because of their size and complexity, the Colorado primaries were particularly important. [See below, "Colorado Party Primaries".] Many analysts viewed these internal elections as an indicator of the administrative readiness for the general elections.

A. Electoral Environment

The 1991 municipal elections were carried out in an open political environment, and restrictions on political activity were not an issue. As in 1989, political parties were free to organize and campaign. In 1990 and through March 1991, there were no substantiated cases of politically motivated deaths and no reported cases of disappearances by security forces.¹³

Since February 1989, the press and media have operated freely and aggressively, reporting on official corruption, although editors are still cautious about some topics, such as stories critical of President Rodríguez.¹⁴ The press and media also approach with care news involving the military.

Esteban Caballero, a columnist for *Ultima Hora* and director of the Center for Democratic Studies, attributes self-censorship to the personal nature of Paraguayan politics. In a small country such as Paraguay, journalists and government officials know each other well. Particularly harsh criticism by a journalist might hinder his or her ability to obtain public services.

During the campaign, isolated incidents of violence were directed at journalists, the most noteworthy being the murder of radio director Santiago Leguizamón in Pedro Juan Caballero. While Leguizamón's killers have not been apprehended, it is believed that the local mafia, closely linked with drug trafficking, is responsible. President Rodríguez, committed to maintaining a free press, has called for a thorough investigation.

Candidate campaigns primarily dealt with the immediate infrastructure needs of the population, such as sewage and running water, rather than long-term national goals, since the elections were only on the municipal level. As has been the case in past campaigns, political parties emphasized personal qualities of the candidates rather than ideology. An ideological consensus exists among all the parties in favor of the democratic opening.

¹³ U.S. Department of State, "Paraguay," *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1990* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), pp. 727-728.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 730.

Candidates for mayor of Asunción advertised frequently on television, but the majority of the campaigning, especially in the interior, was accomplished through flyers, banners and political rallies. Most campaign speeches were delivered in Guaraní. Political parties and factions within parties had access to substantially disparate organizational and financial resources during the campaign. As the party in power, the Colorados enjoyed significant advantages of incumbency. According to opposition members and leaders of dissident factions of the Colorado Party, candidates with sponsors who held high government positions relied on access to state resources for their campaign, while others had to raise funds and develop organizational bases independently.

In addition to the threat of physical force, the Stroessner regime governed through a deeply entrenched system of favors dispensed from Asunción. Access to social and economic benefits, such as government jobs and admission to schools, depended on the patronage of local party bosses and government officials who, in turn, depended on the patronage of higher government and party officials. This access to government power could be converted into a subtle form of pressure on, or intimidation of, voters. Patronage and intimidation were deeply embedded under the Stroessner regime and, while much improved under Rodríguez, politics in Paraguay is still not completely rid of these modes of operation.

The potential to influence or intimidate was still a threat in these elections. Various political leaders in the interior, for example, charge that lower-level employees of the Ministry of Education were pressured by their directors during the Colorado primaries to support candidates of the Tradicionalismo Renovador faction. According to press reports, the directors themselves were allegedly compelled to such tactics by Minister of Education Angel Roberto Seifart, the leader of the Renovador faction. Though direct intimidation did not appear to be an issue in these elections, several opposition figures claimed that more discriminative coercion may have influenced voting.

Most pre-election irregularities could be explained by inexperience or incompetence of electoral officials, but some allegations of fraud were reported. The primary charges involving *cedula* (identification card) and vote-buying. Some opposition supporters placed the number of purchased *cedulas* as high as 2,000.

Several opposition supporters stated that vote-buying was also a fairly widespread practice in the country. In addition to paying a person to vote for a particular candidate, there also existed the possibility of Brazilians with dual Brazilian and Paraguayan citizenship voting in these elections. (Foreigners residing in the country are allowed to vote, but those who live in Brazil are not.) According to opposition allegations, some people who live and work in Brazil retain Paraguayan citizenship and are paid to vote for specific candidates in Paraguayan elections. They claimed that the open border between the two countries makes it easy for foreigners to enter on election day, vote and leave.

B. Colorado Party Primaries

The power base of Colorado Party President Luis Argaña was weakened due to the split in the Tradicionalista faction. In the Colorado primaries held on April 14, 1991, 67 percent of the Tradicionalista Renovador candidates throughout the country won the Colorado Party's nomination for mayor. Only 12 percent of the candidates from Argaña's faction, the Tradicionalista Autónomos, were nominated. Another faction led by Blas Riquelme, the Tradicionalista Democrático, won 14 percent of the nominations.¹⁵ (Riquelme and Seifart have since joined forces to create the Tradicionalista Renovador y Democrático Alliance.) In Asunción, Juan Manuel Morales, who did not claim allegiance to any faction, won the Colorado nomination in Asunción with 55 percent of the vote.

Absenteeism for the primaries in the capital and the interior was about 70 percent. While primary elections were being held in the 206 municipalities throughout the country, the army remained in the barracks. According to the OAS observer delegation, there were "some difficulties," primarily in regard to the voter registries, but they did not affect the outcome of the primaries.¹⁶

¹⁵ "Renewed Old Guard Wins the Day," *Latin American Weekly Report*, May 2, 1991, p. 3.

¹⁶ "Hubo transparencia en el escrutinio," *Noticias*, Suplemento Especial, April 15, 1991, p. 11.

In six towns in the interior, primaries were suspended due to alleged abnormalities. The voting in Ciudad del Este, on the eastern border with Brazil, and the nearby towns of Hernandarias and Carapeguá, also was suspended due to irregularities and subsequent violence.

In Ciudad del Este, primaries were suspended after youth supporters of one of the candidates for mayor, Juan Carlos Barreto, attacked the voting tables, destroying ballot boxes, threatening election officials and beating several members of the press who attempted to record the incident. Despite the presence of OAS observers, several people were beaten enough to require medical attention, and the voting place was badly damaged. The violence broke out after the Barreto supporters accused officials of manipulating the voter registration lists. The Barreto supporters reportedly prevented voters from approaching the polling place and attempted to substitute their own version of the voter registration list at one of the polling sites. The police refused to intervene to restore order, and local military forces had to be called in to control the violence. Two days later, Barreto withdrew his candidacy.

In Hernandarias, voting was suspended after supporters of the new Alianza Democrática faction and the more influential Renovador faction accused the Autónomos of manipulating voter registration lists. After some pushing and shoving, voting resumed. Later, individuals believed to be supporters of the Autónomo candidate returned and stole six ballot boxes. At that point, the opposition coalitions requested that the elections be annulled.

Voting was suspended in Carapeguá due to irregularities in the registry. Representatives of the Tradicionalismo Renovador and another smaller faction of the Colorado Party, the Nueva Alianza, claimed that between 45 and 50 percent of the names had been removed after the parties received the final registry from the Central Electoral Board. (Most of the names left off the list were allegedly from these two factions.) Factions also complained that between 60 and 70 people were unable to obtain voter identification cards in time to vote, even though they had applied for one before the deadline. Due to the omissions in the registry, the local electoral board suspended the primaries. The candidates of the Tradicionalismo Autónomo did not register any complaints.

All six of the suspended primaries were held the following Sunday without incident.

C. Electoral Law

The new electoral law, which was passed by Congress in February 1990 and signed by the president in March, was acceptable to the political parties. The law contained several important changes: congressional seats were to be determined on the basis of proportional representation in Congress (the old system accorded two-thirds of the seats to the party receiving the most votes); members of the military were to be barred from affiliating with a party; independent candidacies were to be allowed; party candidates and officers were to be selected by direct internal party elections; campaigns were to be financed by the state; and media time was to be regulated.

State financing was allotted on the basis of representation in the National Assembly — a definite advantage for the ruling party given the success of the Colorados in 1989. Future campaign funding will be allocated according to mayoral and municipal council representation.

Media time was provided free of charge by radio, television and newspapers throughout Paraguay as authorized by the government. Many owners of media complained, but obeyed the order.

D. Electoral Boards

Elections in Paraguay are administered by the Central Electoral Board (*Junta Electoral Central*). The majority party in Congress nominates six members, and the remaining seats are distributed among the other parties represented in Congress. The current Board comprises six Colorado Party members, one PLRA, one Febrerista and one from the Radical Liberal Party. Under the new electoral law, the Board will eventually have proportional representation of all parties.

Subsidiary to the Central Board are 206 local electoral boards (*juntas electorales seccionales*), one for each municipality. Each local board comprises six members, four from the majority party and one each from the minority parties. (This too will change when the new law is fully implemented for the 1993 presidential elections.) One of the members, with a majority vote of the other members, serves as president. Local boards maintain voter registration lists,

designate polling sites, ensure the availability of materials at polling sites, resolve challenges that arise before and on election day and collect tally sheets from the voting precincts.

E. Electoral Courts

There are eight electoral courts (*tribunal electoral*), one each in every judicial district in the country: a Central Electoral Tribunal (*Tribunal Electoral Central*) in Asunción and seven tribunals in the interior. At least two members of the electoral court 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 resolve conflicts arising from interpretation of the electoral code.

During the municipal elections, the tribunals determined the eligibility of independent candidates. To contest the election as an independent candidate, an individual must not have participated in any party primary either as a candidate or as a voter. Thus, many political parties challenged certain candidates on the grounds that they were not truly independents, but rather Colorado Party members who had lost in the primaries. Most challenged candidates were eventually allowed to participate in the elections. However, the uncertainty caused delays in the printing and subsequent delivery of many ballots since names to be printed were not known until the last moment.

The tribunals resolved any disputes regarding final results and verified the validity of these results before reporting them to the Central Electoral Board. Delays in reporting the results were due in part to the slow verification process by the tribunals.

F. Voter Registration

In the 1989 national elections, the voter registration list was one of the weakest aspects of the electoral system. Colorado supporters often appeared more than once on the registration lists as did the names of deceased. Opposition supporters often found their names deleted from the lists.

For the 1991 municipal elections, an entirely new registration list was compiled. The elections originally scheduled for October 1990 were postponed after the passage of the new electoral code and then delayed again to allow more time for increased voter registration.

The minimum voting age is 18, and voting is obligatory for those under 60. Of the estimated 2.25 million eligible voters, 1.35 million, or about 60 percent, registered by the January 30 deadline. (The registration process opened again after the municipal elections to enable people to register for the Constituent Assembly elections later this year.)

The Central Electoral Board verified the lists as did the political parties. Each party had until March 15 to check for duplications or missing names. After March 15, the Central Electoral Board only accepted "corrections of form," such as misspelled names and transposed identification card (*cedula*) numbers. These corrections of form were allowed until a few weeks before the elections.

The political parties worked in good faith to eliminate errors from the registry, but they recognized that the list was far from perfect on election day. The Central Electoral Board's director of registration conceded that some names of deceased people appeared on the list because changes made to the country's civil registry were not shared with the Central Electoral Board. He added that some errors could be attributed to the inexperience of Central Electoral Board members and staff.

The registration process was disorganized, and many complaints were lodged against the Central Electoral Board. Each political party reviewed the registration lists and found a high percentage of errors and deletions. Briefing the NDI observer teams on the day before the elections, party leaders maintained that confusion was not the result of intentional manipulation of the voter registries by the Colorado Party as much as it was the result of inexperience and/or incompetence.

In addition to inexperience, the Central Electoral Board suffered from a lack of autonomy from the central government, which impeded the Board from compiling an accurate voter registry. To register, a citizen had to first apply for and receive a *cedula* from the police and then go to a local registrar. Opposition politicians charged that authorities facilitated the registration of Colorado supporters and created obstacles for known supporters of other parties. The police, they claimed, was under the jurisdiction of the minister of interior led by a military general partisan to the Colorados. The vague distinction between the government and the Colorado Party made it difficult for

registration to be perceived to have been carried out in a completely objective and nonpartisan manner.

Insufficient resources also made the Central Electoral Board overly dependent on the political parties to promote registration and verify the electoral registries. The Board primarily depended on political parties to uncover irregularities in the voter list and was unable to carry out extensive independent investigations. Because of its vast resources, Colorado Party members were the most active in making necessary corrections.

G. Organization of American States Observer Mission

On December 14, 1990, the Paraguayan government formally invited the Organization of American States (OAS) to observe the electoral process. In March 1991, the OAS sent 10 observers to examine problems relating to the electoral process. Complaints centered on inaccuracies in the voter lists, especially relating to duplications and deletions. By election day, the OAS mission had expanded to 47 members based in 24 municipalities. On election day, the OAS observers visited 66 municipalities. The OAS also observed the Colorado primaries.

The Paraguayan government and the OAS negotiated a formal treaty that extended to OAS observers diplomatic immunity and complete freedom of movement while working within the country. The treaty was approved by both legislative bodies of Paraguay and enacted into law. The OAS also negotiated a formal agreement with the Central Electoral Board, which allowed the observers unimpeded access to all electoral information, including registration lists and vote tallies.

The OAS observer delegation was primarily concerned with the technical aspects of the elections and assisted the local electoral boards in registration and election-day preparations. The electoral boards were allowed complete access to OAS communication equipment, such as telephones and fax machines.

On election day, the OAS unofficially advised the electoral officials when doubts arose. Questions and disputes regarding excess ballots, damaged or missing supplies and the organization of the polling tables were quickly resolved by the OAS coordinator in the area. In the pre-election period, some disputes between party

members regarding the legality of an independent candidate were settled "out of court," in the local OAS office with an OAS official arbitrating.

The OAS mission was viewed as objective by nearly all Paraguayans. Being careful not to jeopardize this reputation, however, the delegation concentrated primarily on technical issues and rarely commented on the actions of the different parties.

Chapter 6

The Week Before Election Day

Correcting inadequate registration lists was the main concern of the Central Electoral Board until the week before election day. At that time, however, an influx of challenges against some independent candidates took precedence.

The challenges cast doubt on the number of candidates in some elections and, as a consequence, the Central Electoral Board was not able to print the ballots and deliver them on time to many of the voting areas in question. This inability to deliver properly printed ballots was the primary reason for the announced suspensions of elections in 42 municipalities three days before election day.

The Central Electoral Tribunal, with jurisdiction over interpretation of the electoral code, did not have the authorization to suspend the elections according to the Central Electoral Board. The Board further asserted that the problems in all but 14 municipalities could be resolved before election day. President Rodríguez was believed to be particularly anxious to see as many of the elections as possible carried out on schedule. The president made no overt

attempt to overrule the authority of the Central Electoral Board, but was in close contact with the officials from the Board and the Central Electoral Tribunal urging a resolution before election day.

Undoubtedly problems arose in some areas that warranted a temporary suspension of the elections. In some cases, however, the suspensions appeared to be implemented without justification. One of the 42 municipalities that had been slated for suspension due to logistical problems was Carapeguá, even though everything seemed in order for the elections. Electoral officials and party members alike were unable to explain the reason for the proposed suspension. In the end, Carapeguá and 27 other municipalities were removed from the list of suspended elections. Thus, only 14 elections were actually suspended before election day. Fifteen more elections were suspended on election day due to logistical difficulties.

Indicative of the confusion before the elections were the differing interpretations of Article 246 of the electoral code.¹⁷ This article authorizes a nationwide suspension of the elections if more than 25 percent of the elections cannot be held. A high ranking official from the Central Electoral Board insisted the law read that a total suspension would take place only if 75 percent of the elections were suspended. In a meeting with NDI observers, he attributed the former interpretation to a campaign of misinformation meant to discredit the electoral process.

With or without such a campaign, confusion reigned. In another meeting with NDI observers the same evening, the leader of the OAS observer delegation also misinterpreted the law to read that 75 percent of the elections must be suspended in order to cancel the event nationwide. While the 25 percent level — 53 elections — was never reached, the differing interpretations added to the perception that the Central Electoral Board was not completely prepared for election day.

¹⁷ The article reads: "Las elecciones deben practicarse en todas las Secciones incluídas en la convocatoria. Si ellas no se hubieren realizado en por lo menos el setenta y cinco por ciento (75%) de las Secciones convocadas, deberá convocarse a nuevas elecciones." (Art. 246, Ley No. 1/90, Código Electoral) "The elections should be carried out in all of the sections included in the decree. If they are not carried out in at least seventy-five (75) percent of the decreed sections, new elections should be held."

Chapter 7

Election Day

A. Administration of the Polling Sites

There were 7,496 polling tables for the municipal elections, of which 1,274 were located in Asunción. No more than 200 voters were assigned to each voting table. To make it easier for the voter to arrive at the correct place, most of the municipalities located all of the voting tables at one central site.

At each polling table, elections were administered by a three-member board comprised of a president and two other electoral officials, selected by lottery from a list of candidates presented by the political parties. In order to qualify to be an electoral official, a citizen had to be a registered voter, a resident of the electoral district and literate. An election official could not be a candidate. Alternates were assigned in case an election official did not appear at the designated time on election day. No site could open until all three officials or the alternates were present. If the officials were not present, the members of the electoral board of the municipality were to open the polling site and oversee the voting.

Before the polls opened, electoral officials set up the voting table and placed voter information signs in visible locations. During election day, the officials checked voters' identification cards, made sure the ballots were placed in the ballot box and marked each voter's finger with indelible ink after voting. Any problems arising from potential voters were directed to the officials, who were authorized to request the assistance of the police. When the polls opened, the electoral officials signed a blank copy of an *acta*, an official document on which were to be recorded the results of the polling table and observations of the electoral officials and parties. The *acta* was signed again when the voting closed.

Each political party designated a pollwatcher for every polling table and a supervisor (*apoderado*) responsible for the entire polling site for his or her party. The pollwatchers were seated at the voting table with the electoral officials. The pollwatchers' observance of perceived irregularities were recorded in the official *acta* of the polling table.

B. Balloting Process

The polls opened at 7 a.m. The alphabetical voter registry at each polling area contained the first and last names of the voter and his or her address and national identification number. The voter presented his or her identification card (*cedula*) to the electoral officials who compared the information to the registry. If there was only one error (such as the first and last name reversed), the voter was still allowed to vote. However, if two or more errors appeared on the registration list, the voter was turned away. If the voter was allowed to vote, the official signed the registry beside the voter's name and placed a check mark next to the voter's name in a duplicate registration book. Party leaders believed this system allowed the maximum number of people to vote but still prevented abuses of the system.

Once the voter was approved by the election officials, he or she was given one ballot for mayor and one ballot for council members and directed to a curtained booth. The ballot for mayor contained the pictures of the mayoral candidates and the parties' names and colors. The ballot for council members contained the parties' colors. Behind the curtain, the voter marked his or her preferences on the ballots, folded the ballot, returned to the table at which the electoral officials

were seated and deposited the ballots in a transparent box located there. The voter's identification card was then stamped by the president of the polling table, and the voter's finger was marked with indelible ink to discourage duplicate voting.

The polls were scheduled to close at 5 p.m.; voters still in line at that time, however, were permitted to vote.

C. Counting Process

After the polls closed, the president of the polling site counted the names on the list of those who voted and recorded this number on the registry. The pollwatchers and officials also signed the registry.

When the names of those who voted were verified from the registry, the president, with the help of other officials, opened the ballots and placed them in stacks, according to party. Each stack was then counted and recounted in the presence of the pollwatchers. The results and any comments and objections from pollwatchers were recorded on the *acta*. Each party pollwatcher received an official tally sheet on which to mark the results.

When the count was completed, the electoral officials and the party pollwatchers signed the *acias*. The *actas* noted 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 exceeded the number of people who voted according to the official list, the president would remove at random and destroy the excess number of ballots from the box. 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 that polling table would have been nullified.

One copy of the official *acta* was transported to the appropriate local electoral board along with the ballots and ballot boxes, and another was sent to the Central Electoral Board. The *actas* were tabulated at the 206 local boards, which in turn phoned the results to the Central Electoral Board.

Before election day, the Central Electoral Board announced that 80 percent of the results would be available by midnight on election day. While most of the results were known by the following day because of the presence of independent vote counts in nearly all of the

major cities, the Central Electoral Board still did not release a complete list of the official results to the public until more than a month after the elections.

D. Delegation Observations

The delegation noted many technical and administrative problems on election day, but reported no incidents of outright fraud. In some areas observed by NDI, such as Concepción, Horqueta and Loreto, the elections were extremely well run: supplies arrived on time, the polls opened on time and voters easily located their assigned polling sites. While isolated cases of improprieties existed, the elections in these areas were well-administered.

In many areas, however, elections were poorly administered. In Asunción and Ciudad del Este, the two largest cities in Paraguay, some polls opened hours late and voters spent many more hours looking for their respective polling sites. In many cases, voters were unable to find their names on the registry and were not able to vote.

1. Asunción

The most vivid example of confusion was evident in Asunción. According to media reports during the day, thousands of people were unable to vote because their names did not appear on the registration lists. Many spent hours going to several polling tables in search of their names. Some reports claimed that 50 percent of the people who turned out to vote could not do so because their names did not appear on the registry. As a result of this massive confusion, many voters began denouncing the elections as fraudulent, some drawing comparisons with the elections held under former President Alfredo Stroessner.

By midmorning on election day, electoral officials in Asunción spoke seriously of canceling all elections nationwide due to complete disorganization in the capital. At about noon, President Rodríguez met for about an hour with the president of the Central Electoral Board, José Luis Ibarra Llano, to discuss ways in which the suspensions could be minimized.

By late morning, most opposition parties were denouncing the process. The PLRA noted, however, that the problems with the registration lists appeared to be affecting all parties equally. Fraud benefitting the Colorado Party, such as the purchase and alteration of

registration cards, were “widespread, but not massive,” according to one PLRA member.

Due to the confusion at some polling sites, the Central Electoral Board allowed voting to proceed beyond the prescribed 5 p.m. closing time. Nevertheless, opposition political parties led by the Febreristas believed the elections were sufficiently flawed to merit annulment. Filizzola did not endorse the call to annul the elections, due perhaps to preliminary results that indicated he would win the mayoralty contest in Asunción.

2. Interior

Problems were also reported in Ciudad del Este, the second largest city in Paraguay. Voter registries did not arrive until 4:30 a.m. on the morning of election day. Since the voter registries were delivered so late, officials were just beginning to set up tables and distribute ballot boxes and other elections materials at 7 a.m., when the polls were scheduled to open. Some voters were admitted into the polling place even though the registries were still being distributed. At some polls, voting began at 8:30 a.m. while other polls did not open until 10:30 a.m.

Supplies such as indelible ink and ballots did not arrive until mid-morning in many areas, causing delays and in at least one case, Colonel Oviedo, suspensions.

Distance from the supply distribution center in Asunción did not seem to be a factor. The department of Concepción, a six-hour drive from the Asunción, received supplies on time while other areas much closer to Asunción did not.

While irregularities were not widespread, isolated signs were detected in the interior. When the NDI observers visited the Colorado Party headquarters on election day following a voter training program, they saw many ballots thrown on the floor. One observer in this area also found a number of unused ballots on the floor of a public rest room.

In Pedro Juan Caballero, several boxes of ballots were unloaded from the plane in which they arrived and carried away, without authorization, to an undisclosed location. The ballots were later recovered.

3. Voting by foreigners

Because of the presence of numerous Brazilians and Argentines in Paraguay, the new electoral law extended eligibility to all country residents, regardless of nationality. In most cases, however, the registries that contained the names of foreigners did not arrive. In these instances, the foreign voters were instructed to sign a register indicating that they had attempted to vote. (Since voting is obligatory, proof of having voted, or having at least made the attempt, is required by the government.)

The absence of the registries containing the names of foreign-born voters in Alto Paraná, a region that borders Brazil, was a particularly sensitive issue. Brazilian settlers have often felt vulnerable and insecure and were frequently preyed upon by officials under the Stroessner regime. Their presence in Paraguay has been the object of much nationalistic rhetoric by opposition parties as well. Though their exclusion from the registries may have stemmed from poor organization, as was the case for a number of Paraguayan nationals, some foreigners felt this was an intentional act directed at them as Brazilian immigrants and took it as further evidence of their lack of legal rights.

4. Local electoral boards

Disputes often arose between parties concerning minor violations of voting procedures. Inexperienced electoral officials had a difficult time arbitrating. Their indecision created a great deal of confusion.

In Ciudad del Este, a candidate who had been challenged but had appealed the challenge had his name crossed out on the ballots until midday. At noon, the local electoral board reversed its decision and decided to allow the name to remain on the ballot. Ballots with the candidate's name crossed out were nullified.

Overzealous party members were often caught stretching or breaking the electoral rules, but election officials were loathe to discipline. In Carapeguá, a confrontation arose when a Colorado Party member was caught taking official ballots to voters in order to show them how to vote. The officials from the other parties objected vociferously, but to no avail.

Another questionable incident was witnessed in Concepción. PLRA pollwatchers brought to the local electoral board office a

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Colorado supporter campaigning inside the polling place. The woman had been displaying a copy of the ballot marked for the Colorado candidate to indicate to voters for whom to mark their ballots. A loud exchange ensued between party officials; the PLRA asked that a formal complaint be lodged. The president of the local electoral board, a Colorado Party member, did not register the complaint and asked everyone to leave the office. The woman drove away with the Colorado representatives and the copy of the ballot.

5. Counting the ballots

All the polls observed by the members of the NDI delegation closed without incident, and the counting process proceeded as planned. During the count, observers noted that a large number of ballots were blank or incorrectly marked, indicating that many voters were ignorant of proper voting procedures.

In the interior, NDI observers noticed a disproportionate number of police inside the polling sites. Some of the officers even approached the sites once the polls had closed and the count had begun. None of the election officials or pollwatchers seemed intimidated by this presence, however, and the police did not intrude on the process. Any citizen could be present for the count as long as he or she did not interfere with the work of the electoral officials. The president of the polling site had the authority to expel anyone who hindered the counting procedure.

6. Conclusions

Although there were major administrative problems, the opposition political parties did not think they reflected a systematic attempt by the Colorado Party to commit fraud. Furthermore, the parties did not believe the confusion changed the outcome of the majority of races. The problems with the registration lists, for example, affected all parties equally, PLRA members concluded. [For detailed observations of sites visited by NDI observers, see Team Reports, Appendix VII.]

The OAS observer mission drew similar conclusions, noting that "important components of an electoral process were, in general, present and respected; namely, secret ballots, access to voting sites, the absence of violence or coercion, the use of indelible ink, the presence of party pollwatchers and party representatives and clear

counting procedures, as well as other elements that legitimize a democratic poll.”¹⁸ The OAS also recognized “numerous irregularities of a technical-organizational and logistical nature...but not to a degree or level that would invalidate the observed polls.”¹⁹

E. Results

Of the 206 mayoral elections, the Colorado Party won 154. Forty-two of the newly elected mayors are from the Authentic Radical Liberal Party and seven are independent, although according to electoral officials, four of these are former Colorado Party members.

The most visible independent mayoral victory was registered in Asunción. Carlos Filizzola of the Asunción For All Movement won 61,767 of the 180,229 votes cast or 34.27 percent. The Colorado candidate, Juan Morales, placed second with 27.01 percent (48,683 votes). The PLRA candidate, Félix Bogado Gondra finished third (35,114 votes, 19.48 percent). Euclides Acevedo of the Febrerista Party was fourth with 10.58 percent (19,074). The 24-member city council in Asunción is split among major parties and independent movements: Asunción For All has eight members, the Colorados seven, the PLRA six, the Febreristas two, and Beyond Colors (*Más Allá de los Colores*), another independent movement, one.

Although the Colorado Party won nearly 75 percent of the mayoral seats, opposition parties gained considerable influence in the municipal elections. Like the city council in Asunción, many in the interior are 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 environs, the majority of Paraguayans will be governed by a mayor who is from an opposition party.

Results were not released immediately by the Central Electoral Board, but it was widely believed this was due to disarray rather than malfeasance. Despite the tardiness of the board, projected winners and losers in most races were known shortly after the polls closed due to results released by a number of independent, parallel vote counts.

¹⁸ "OAS Election Observers Release Communique," *Asunción ABC COLOR*, May 27, 1991 in FBIS-LAT-91-102, p. 53.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, p. 53.

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Parallel vote counts were conducted in Asunción and 11 of the largest cities by SAKA and the Group for Social Sciences, both Paraguayan organizations, and the European Center Consortium for International Cooperation and Cultural Exchange, a French organization.

A total of 29 elections were postponed until June 29, 1991 – 15 had been suspended before election day and another 14 were suspended on election day. The OAS was present on June 26 for the elections and noted that most of them took place without incident. Three areas, however – Mayor Martinez, Pirayú, and Juan Manuel Frutos – were suspended indefinitely.

Chapter 8

Reflections

Paraguay is one of two countries in Latin America in which NDI has organized two international observer delegations.²⁰ The elections in Paraguay took place two years apart, and a comparison of the conduct of the elections and the electoral campaigns provides an indicator of the democratic progress made by the country during that period. Comparing the administration of the two elections also highlights areas in which progress has been disappointing.

The most significant difference between the 1991 elections and the 1989 campaign was the diversity of candidates and parties that participated in the municipal elections relative to the national elections. In 1989, the short campaign period did not permit the opposition parties to organize and campaign sufficiently, and the electoral law excluded independent candidates. The result was a lopsided victory for the Colorados and continued dominance of the two major parties, which collectively obtained 94 percent of the vote.

²⁰ Chile is the other.

The election law and procedures for the 1989 elections reflected, as NDI noted in its report that year, "the interests of a system favoring one dominant political party; they restrict, rather than promote, political competition."²¹ By 1991, an electoral law accepted by all political parties provided independent and coalition candidacies, state financing of campaigns and regulation of media time.

The Colorado Party has also experienced some reforms during the two years between the elections. Although the party is deeply divided into a number of factions, the more democratic currents appear to have the upper hand, as indicated by the poor showing of the more authoritarian factions in the party primaries in April 1991. NDI noted in 1989 that, "Election day was marred ... by attempts by Colorado Party officials in certain regions to ensure that their candidates achieved overwhelming victories."²² By 1991, the opposition parties reported only minor instances of fraud.

Despite such improvements, the chaotic nature of the 1991 polling was similar to the climate of the 1989 elections in many respects. Some Paraguayan voters in areas where the elections were poorly administered said on election day night that the elections were better organized under President Stroessner.

The election registry used in 1989 was based on the lists used during Stroessner's tenure. Opposition parties complained that those lists contained duplicate names of Colorado Party supporters and did not include names of opposition supporters who had registered. For the 1991 elections, an entirely new registration list was compiled, to the satisfaction of the political parties. Nevertheless, on election day, thousands of voters could not find their names on the lists where they believed they were to vote. The reason for such omissions has yet to be explained satisfactorily. It would appear to underscore, however, the need to better train electoral officials. Employees of the Central Electoral Board may have lacked appropriate technical training, but electoral officials, including magistrates of the electoral board, were also unfamiliar with vital sections of the electoral law. The Central

²¹ *The 1989 Paraguayan Elections: A Foundation for Democratic Change* (Washington, D.C.: National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, 1989), p. 2.

²² *Ibid*, p. 2.

Electoral Board, jealous of its autonomy and sovereignty, has been hesitant to accept assistance from organizations outside Paraguay. Electoral officials should consider finding organizations respectful of Paraguay's sovereignty and the Board's experience to engage in programs to share information.

The next few years in Paraguay are likely to be characterized by a continuation of the democratic transition begun in 1989. Elections for a Constituent Assembly were held on December 1, 1991 and the Assembly is expected to extensively amend the constitution. Presidential elections will be held in 1993, providing an opportunity for candidates to seriously contend for the presidency. Administering the Constituent Assembly elections will enable the Central Electoral Board to improve its administrative capacity. The 1993 presidential elections will also provide an opportunity to reduce quarrels over the elected government's legitimacy.

Postscript

THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS

December 1, 1991

On December 1, 1991 Paraguay held elections to designate representatives for the National Constituent Assembly that will draft the new Paraguayan constitution.

According to international and Paraguayan observers, the process was better administered in these elections than in the municipal elections of May 1991. Materials and voters' lists were present at 99 percent of the tables. Voting procedures were respected and tally sheets were relatively well managed.

Turnout for these elections was low, especially when compared to the municipal elections of 1991. Only 52 percent of registered voters cast ballots on December 1 as compared with nearly 72 percent in May 1991.

Election results also differed. In the Constituent Assembly elections, the Colorado Party won nearly 55 percent of the vote as compared with 43 percent in the municipal elections four months prior. The Authentic Radical Liberal Party, PLRA, obtained 27 percent in the Constituent Assembly, down from 30 percent in the May municipal elections. Independent candidates continued to attract support, winning 11 percent of the vote, though this figure was down from 19 percent in the municipal elections.

APPENDICES

Appendix I

Sample of CED Poll Results

Did you register to vote?

Response	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Yes	1485	83.1	83.1
No	301	16.9	16.9
TOTAL	1786	100.0	100.0

If no, why didn't you register?

Response	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Couldn't get birth certificate	9	.5	3.1
Couldn't get identity card (<i>cedula</i>)	93	5.2	32.2
Couldn't reach the registration official	34	1.9	11.8
Registration period ended	37	2.1	12.8
Did not have time	63	3.5	21.8
Not interested	53	3.0	18.3
Registered or no answer given	1497	83.8	Missing
TOTAL	1786	100.0	100.0

If answered "not interested," then, why aren't you interested in participating in the elections?

Response	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Nothing will change	17	1.0	36.2
Don't believe politicians	26	1.5	55.5
Believe there will be fraud	3	.2	6.4
No freedom of choice	1	.1	2.1
Not applicable or answer not given	1739	97.4	Missing
TOTAL	1786	100.0	100.0

If you did register, why did you register?

Response	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
I want to participate in the elections	851	47.6	59.1
The law says it is obligatory	553	31.0	38.4
I'm afraid of what may happen if I don't obey the law	35	2.0	2.4
Not applicable or answer not given	347	19.4	Missing
TOTAL	1786	100.0	100.0

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Who or what was the principal motivator for you to register?

Response	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Political party	185	10.4	12.7
Campaign, radio, TV, newspaper	67	3.8	4.6
Neighborhood	22	1.2	1.5
Friend/family	149	8.3	10.2
Civic organization	27	1.5	1.9
Church	7	.4	.5
Own decision	1001	56.0	68.7
Didn't register or answer not given	328	18.4	Missing
TOTAL	1786	100.0	100.0

Do you think the municipal elections will have:

Response	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
No irregularities	478	26.8	27.0
Few irregularities	625	35.0	35.3
Many irregularities	170	9.5	9.6
Don't know/no response	496	27.8	28.0
No answer given	17	1.0	Missing
TOTAL	1786	100.0	100.0

What document do you need to vote?

Response	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Party affiliation card	13	.7	.7
Military services card	2	.1	.1
Registr. certificate	494	27.7	27.8
Identity card	1130	63.3	63.6
Birth certificate	3	.2	.2
Don't know	134	7.5	7.5
Answer not given	10	.6	Missing
TOTAL	1786	100.0	100.0

To fill which posts are the municipal elections?

Response	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
President of the Republic	64	3.6	3.6
Deputies and senators	4	.2	.2
Mayors and city council members	1589	89.0	89.6
Representatives for Constituent Assembly	2	.1	.1
Don't know	114	6.4	6.4
Answer not given	13	.7	Missing
TOTAL	1786	100.0	100.0

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What part of the voting procedure needs the greatest dissemination of information?

Response	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Were to vote the day of the election?	351	19.7	20.1
What document you need to take in order to be able to vote?	63	3.5	3.6
Who are the candidates?	75	4.2	4.3
How does one cast a ballot?	524	29.3	30.1
Where can one find out who the candidates are the day of the election?	32	1.8	1.8
Who will certify that I voted?	116	6.5	6.7
When will the results be known?	70	3.9	4.0
Who do I denounce irregularities to?	182	10.2	10.4
From what time to what time are the polling sites open?	69	3.9	4.0
Don't know	261	14.6	15.0
No answer given	43	2.4	Missing
TOTAL	1786	100.0	100.0

Are you affiliated with a political party?

Response	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Yes	1360	76.1	76.6
No	411	23.0	23.2
Don't know/ no response	4	.2	.2
Answer not given	11	.6	Missing
TOTAL	1786	100.0	100.0

Appendix II

**Press Coverage of NDI Visit
March, 1991**

Asunción, martes 19 de marzo de 1991

abc

DELEGADO DE INSTITUCION NORTEAMERICANA

Realizan consultas para enviar veedores

Mark Feierstein, oficial de programas del Instituto Nacional Demócrata para Asuntos Internacionales, de los Estados Unidos, realizó ayer una serie de consultas con autoridades electorales y líderes de agrupaciones políticas a fin de determinar el eventual envío de una misión de observadores de dicha entidad para presenciar los comicios municipales de mayo.

Feierstein llegó a Asunción el sábado pasado. Sus entrevistas las realiza en compañía de Esteban Caballero, director ejecutivo del Centro de Estudios Democráticos (CED), organización no gubernamental de nuestro país que desde hace aproximadamente tres años recibe el apoyo del instituto norteamericano.

En la mañana de ayer, el delegado del citado organismo se entrevistó con autoridades de la Junta Electoral Central, con quienes realizó un primer acercamiento para determinar las facilidades con que contarían los veedores internacionales, entre otras cosas.

Posteriormente tenía fijado un almuerzo con Carlos Filizola, candidato independiente a la Intendencia de Asunción. Asimismo tenía marcada una entrevista con el delegado de la Organización de los Estados Americanos (OEA), Rubén Perina, quien se encuentra también en Asunción preparando la venida de observadores de esta entidad, a solicitud de nuestro gobierno.

El domingo pasado Feierstein dialogó con los dirigentes del radicalismo auténtico Luis Guanes Gondra y Juan Félix Bogado Gondra, candidato del principal partido de opositor a la Intendencia capitalina.

En los próximos días tiene previsto conversar con representantes de las Fuerzas Armadas, según lo declaró.



Aspecto de la reunión verificada en la JEC. (De izq. a der.) Rafael Jacobo, Eladio Céspedes, Joaquín Cazal, Esteban Caballero y Mark Feierstein

abc

Asunción, domingo 17 de marzo de 1991.

Instituto de EE.UU. desea apoyar el proceso electoral

Mark Feierstein, oficial de programas del Instituto Nacional Demócrata para Asuntos Internacionales, de los Estados Unidos, llegó ayer a nuestro país para analizar la situación política actual y determinar el eventual envío de una misión de observadores a los comicios municipales. Dijo que la citada entidad desea apoyar el proceso electoral paraguayo.

La institución norteamericana colabora desde hace aproximadamente tres años con el Centro de Estudios Democráticos (CED) de nuestro país. En tal sentido, se vienen realizando paneles-debate para incrementar la participación en los comicios de mayo y para capacitar a los veedores que actuarán en esa oportunidad.

El Instituto Nacional Demócrata es el brazo internacional del Partido Demócrata y fue fundado hace ocho años para trabajar con partidos políticos en países que están dando pasos hacia la "democratización", dijo Feierstein poco después de su arribo.

Indicó que durante su estadía en Asunción se entrevistara con líderes de las agrupaciones políticas, autoridades del Gobierno y repre-

sentantes de las Fuerzas Armadas "para entender un poco más sobre la situación política para saber cómo podemos apoyar este proceso", expresó.

"No estamos aquí para calificar el proceso. La idea es apoyarlo. En algunos países como Nicaragua y Chile, no quiero comparar a Paraguay con estos países, pero si dar algunos ejemplos, algunas personas no tenían confianza todavía en los procesos electorales y la presencia de extranjeros aumentó su confianza porque la gente sabía que los ojos del mundo estaban puestos en su país", manifestó.

Finalmente puntualizó que piensa entrevistarse con el general Anibal Regis Romero, a quien conoció en un seminario sobre FF.AA. realizado en el Uruguay.



Mark Feierstein

Appendix III

Terms of Reference

TO: International Delegation Members
FROM: NDI
DATE: May 10, 1991
RE: Terms of Reference

The National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) is organizing a 16-member international delegation to observe the May 26, 1991 municipal elections in Paraguay. The delegation includes legislators, political party leaders, election experts and democratic activists from eight countries; the United States component includes Republicans and Democrats.

NDI has been invited to organize this observer delegation by the Center for Democratic Studies (CED) and opposition political parties, and the Paraguayan government has welcomed the delegation. The CED, a nonpartisan civic education institute, was established in 1988 with the help of NDI. As part of its mandate, the CED will help NDI coordinate the activities of the delegation.

NDI has experience organizing international election missions in a number of countries, including Bulgaria, Chile, Czechoslovakia, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Haiti, Hungary, Namibia, Panama, Pakistan, the Philippines, Romania and Taiwan. In May 1989, NDI organized a 19-member international delegation for the presidential and legislative elections in Paraguay. The delegation found that, despite irregularities and instances of outright fraud in the balloting process, Paraguayans from across the political spectrum acknowledged that the elections marked a significant step forward in the effort to establish democratic government. This, however, is the first time NDI is observing exclusively a municipal election process.

The May 26 elections are considered an important indicator of Paraguay's democratization process. It will be the first time in the country's history that mayors will be elected by popular vote. Previously they had been appointed by the Ministry of Interior. A pre-election survey mission to Paraguay in April 1991 found that, although positive steps have been taken to insure free and fair

elections, such as the creation of a new electoral code and improvement of the voter registration lists, doubts still remain about the process. A survey conducted in late April showed that 50 percent of the respondents believed there would be at least some fraud in the elections. The opposition expects the Electoral Board to try to conduct honest elections, but doubts remain about the board's technical and organizational capacity.

In observing the 1991 elections, the delegation does not presume to supervise the elections or to interfere in Paraguayan affairs. The delegation will observe the elections in accordance with internationally recognized standards for the monitoring of electoral processes. Ultimately, it is the Paraguayan people who must make the final judgement about the significance of these elections.

The delegation's presence will demonstrate the international community's continued interest in and support for free and fair elections and democratic development in Paraguay. It will provide the international community with an objective assessment of Paraguay's electoral process. In addition, members of the delegation will have an opportunity to learn more about the development of democracy in Paraguay and to reflect on how this relates to the issues of political development in their respective countries.

Given that the delegation will be observing municipal elections, NDI has considered several questions relating to how best the elections can be observed. Should the delegation focus on the overall national picture or on selected municipal contests? Should the delegation evaluate the process based on the outcome by party or are parties *per se* a less relevant variable in considering a municipal election process? Can the delegation rely on domestic organizations or other international observers (e.g., the OAS) to provide credible information regarding municipalities the delegation does not visit?

There are no easy answers to these questions. Indeed, NDI hopes that members of the delegation, based on their experiences in Paraguay, will comment on these matters during the post-election debriefing.

For these elections, NDI's approach will be to focus on five electoral contests in different regions of the country. These contests will involve both heavily-populated municipalities and some municipalities that are less populated. The focus will be on

evaluating individual contests, rather than relying principally on the picture as presented by party representatives based in Asunción.

The delegation's observations and other credible sources of information will form the basis for conclusions about the elections. The delegation must attempt to document its observations and in all instances to distinguish objective from subjective judgments. To accomplish this task, the delegation will meet with government and election officials, leaders of political parties, and representatives of other institutions playing a role in the electoral process. NDI will seek to coordinate with the OAS and other observer delegations to the extent possible, and will share information with these organizations; the delegation's post-election evaluation, however, will be offered independent of any other delegation.

The delegation will arrive in Asunción on May 23 and depart on May 28. On May 23, NDI staff members will brief the delegation and provide a detailed itinerary. On May 24, the delegation will meet with election officials, political party leaders, candidates, nonpartisan civic leaders and others involved in the process. Following the meetings, the delegation will issue an arrival statement.

To obtain a national perspective on the political environment and the electoral process, the delegation will then divide into teams that will deploy throughout the country. Upon arrival in the regions, the teams will meet with election officials and political party leaders.

On election day, May 26, the teams will visit polling places and counting centers, observing the general conduct of the elections. Special attention will be paid to those areas identified by political party representatives.

The entire delegation will reassemble in Asunción on May 27 for a debriefing, preparation of the delegation statement, and a press conference.

Drawing upon the information gathered by the team members, the delegation will publish a comprehensive report after the elections. The report will include the delegation's observations and assessment of the issues listed below.

Because of the possibility that casual statements may be taken out of context, delegates should not make any comments to the media regarding their personal observation of the elections until after the delegation has reconvened in Asunción, all the teams have provided

their briefings, and the delegation has issued its formal statement. [See "Press Guidelines" in the briefing book.] Only then will delegation members have a national perspective on the electoral process.

Based on NDI's previous work in Paraguay and the findings of the survey mission that visited Paraguay in April, the following are among the issues the delegation will explore:

A. THE POLITICAL CAMPAIGN

1. Were there any restrictions, *de facto* or *de jure*, that prevented the political parties and independent candidates from conducting their respective campaigns?
2. Were there arrests, detentions or killings of party leaders or other individuals during the campaign that appear politically motivated?
3. Were citizens free to organize and become politically involved, whatever their political views?
4. Were voters intimidated into voting for (or not voting for) a particular coalition, party or candidate by the armed forces, political parties or government officials?
5. Was there any evidence of illegal campaign practices by any of the participants? How did the authorities respond to these charges?
6. Was there evidence of government or military support for any of the coalitions, parties or candidates participating in the elections?
7. Did candidates feel free to advocate any position?
8. Were government resources used to give an advantage to any party or candidate? What effect did this have on the campaign?

B. ROLE OF THE PRESS AND MEDIA

1. What was the role of the media in the elections? Did the competing parties obtain adequate and relatively equal access to the press and media?
2. Did the government-controlled media provide adequate and balanced coverage of the political campaign?
3. Did journalists feel free to cover controversial topics? Were certain subjects considered taboo?

C. ADMINISTRATION OF ELECTIONS

1. Did the National Election Board conduct the elections in a politically neutral manner? Were authorities independent of political direction?
2. Were some voters disenfranchised because of the inability to acquire voter credentials?
3. Were voters identified in accordance with the procedures established by the electoral code?
4. Were some voters prevented from voting because of errors with their registration credentials?
5. Did the electoral officials act, and were they perceived to act, in a nonpartisan manner?
6. Were there adequate safeguards to prevent widespread fraud in the balloting process?
7. Were voters able to cast a secret ballot?
8. Were prospective voters arbitrarily removed from the electoral registry or assigned to polling sites far from their homes?
9. Were there measures to prevent multiple voting?
10. Were people registered that were not eligible to vote, such as under-age Paraguayans and foreigners?
11. Were pollwatchers designated by the political parties permitted access to polling site and counting centers?
12. Were there any challenges to the balloting or counting process?

D. RESULTS

1. Were the official results reported in accordance with the election law?
2. Did political parties have access to the ballot counting centers of the local electoral boards?
3. Were ballots counted in the manner established by the election law? Were there suspicious delays in the preparation or release of election returns?
4. Did the political parties recognize the results? If not, were challenges filed in accordance with the election law?

E. THE ELECTIONS GENERALLY

1. Did citizens view the elections as a useful mechanism to express their political views?
2. Did the electoral process contribute to the strengthening of the democratic process in Paraguay?
3. Did citizens appear informed regarding the choices being presented in these elections? Did the civic education programs provide adequate information regarding the mechanics of voting?
4. What role did the international observers play in the process?

Appendix IV

Delegation Schedule

THURSDAY MAY 23, 1991

- 1:15 p.m. Delegation arrival
3:30 p.m. Assemble in hotel lobby for credentials
8:30 p.m. Dinner – Restaurante Lapacho (Hotel Guarani 13th floor)

FRIDAY MAY 24, 1991

- 8:30 a.m. Assemble in lobby to walk to conference center
Meetings to be held in:
Carlos Pellegrini Room
Banco de la Nación Argentina
- 9 a.m. NDI Briefing:
Mark Feierstein
Program Officer for Latin America
Donna Huffman
Program Officer/Grants Administrator
Esteban Caballero
Director, Center for Democratic Studies
- 10 a.m. Briefing by electoral officials:
Rafael Jacobo, National Electoral Board
Representative, Electoral Tribunal of Asunción
- 11 a.m. Briefing by candidates:
Euclides Acevedo: Febrerista Party (PRF)
Carlos Filizzola: Asunción Independent
Movement for All
Juan Bogado Gondra: Authentic Radical Liberal
Party (PLRA)
Juan Manuel Morales: Colorado Party
- 12 noon Return to hotel for lunch in Restaurante Lapacho
- 2:30 p.m. Meet in lobby for transportation to Ministry of Interior

- 3 p.m. Meeting with Dr. Marco Antonio Oviedo Huerta,
Vice Minister of Interior
- 3:45 p.m. Return to conference center
- 4 p.m. Briefing by political party representatives:
Oscar Facundo Insfrán: Colorado Party
Juan Manuel Benitez Florentín: PLRA
- 5:30 p.m. Press conference
- 7:30 p.m. Reception for delegation at U.S. Embassy
Ambassador Timothy Towell
- 9:45 p.m. Team leaders meeting

SATURDAY MAY 25, 1991

Team Deployments

- 5:30 a.m. Concepción and Pedro Juan Caballero teams depart
for airport.
- 9 a.m. Ciudad del Este team departs
- 12:30 p.m. Carapegua team departs

SUNDAY MAY 26, 1991

Teams observe voting

MONDAY MAY 27, 1991

- A.M. Teams return to Asunción
- 12 noon Debriefing session
La Cumbre Room
Inter-express Building
19th Floor
- 5 p.m. Press conference: La Cumbre room

Appendix V

Pre-Election Statement

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

May 24, 1991
Asunción, Paraguay

I am Al Graham, a Senator in the Canadian Parliament. I am pleased to once again co-lead an international observer delegation to elections in Paraguay. It is my privilege to introduce my colleagues on this delegation, which is present to observe the May 26 municipal elections.

This delegation is being organized by the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, a democratic development institute in Washington, D.C. that conducts nonpartisan programs around the world. NDI has organized election observer delegations in more than a dozen countries in Europe, Asia and throughout Latin America. It has gained a worldwide reputation for its expertise and neutrality in electoral matters.

Because these are the first elections since the 1989 national elections and the first time mayors will be elected in Paraguayan history, they may provide an indicator of Paraguay's democratic progress.

The 16 delegates — who are legislators, leaders of political parties, election experts and civic leaders — come from Canada, Costa Rica, Colombia, Guyana, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama and the United States; the U.S. component of the delegation is bipartisan. Several delegation members have experience observing elections in other countries as members of NDI delegations or other organizations.

Before explaining the purpose of our presence in Paraguay, I will introduce the co-leaders of the delegation. Andrés Pastrana is a former mayor of Bogotá, Colombia. Bruce Morrison, who will arrive tomorrow, is a former member of the United States Congress who has long been interested in the Paraguayan political and human rights situation. Congressman Morrison and I co-led the NDI-

sponsored international delegation to the May 1989 Paraguayan national elections.

We are not here to arbitrate or interfere in the internal affairs of Paraguay. We do not presume to judge the election process; Paraguay is a sovereign and proud nation. We are here to demonstrate international support for the democratic process 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 representative of the democratic spectrum and are here because they have demonstrated in their careers a strong commitment to democracy. We are all interested in learning from the Paraguayans regarding the nature of the electoral process and its implications for Paraguay's consolidation of democracy. We hope to learn a great deal that we can take home to our own countries.

This approach is consistent with the practice of international election observing, a practice that is now widely accepted within the democratic community of nations. Given the historic nature of these elections and their significance for the future of Paraguay, it is not surprising that they have attracted considerable attention. 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.

To fulfill the objectives set forth for the delegation by NDI, we met today with a broad spectrum of political leaders, candidates, as well as members of the Central Electoral Board and Central Electoral Tribunal, military officials and civic leaders. Tomorrow the delegation will divide into six teams to observe the voting and counting in cities throughout the country. While in the regions, team members will meet with local election and government officials, as well as candidates and party representatives. On Sunday the teams will observe the balloting and counting. The delegation is particularly interested in hearing the opinions of Paraguayans as they assess the campaign, the procedures on election day and the results.

This is the first time NDI is observing exclusively a municipal election process. We will focus on five electoral contests in different regions of the country. These contests will involve both heavily-

populated municipalities and some municipalities that are less populated. The focus will be on evaluating individual contests, rather than relying principally on the picture as presented by party representatives based in Asunción.

The delegation will regroup in Asunción on Monday to exchange impressions. We expect to report our views to the international community at a press conference on Monday at 5 p.m. Our appraisal of the process, we hope, will reflect that of the Paraguayan people.

The determination of Paraguay's municipal governments rests, as it should, in the hands of people freely elected by the people of Paraguay. We share their hopes for peaceful elections and for the continued development of its democracy.

Thank you.

Appendix VI

Election-Day Deployment Sites

ASUNCION I

Mark Feierstein
Miles Fitzpartick
B.A. Graham

CIUDAD DEL ESTE

Juan Casafont
Tina Flournoy
Beverly Nagel

ASUNCION II

Suzy George
Bruce Morrison
Andrés Pastrana

CONCEPCION

Jeffrey Bergner
Julio Faesler
Steven Griner

CARAPEGUA

David Forman
Louis Goodman
Johanna Mendelson
Elizabeth McIninch

**PEDRO JUAN
CABALLERO**

Rita DiMartino
Donna Huffman
Agustín Jarquín

Appendix VII

NDI Team Reports

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

CIUDAD DEL ESTE

Team Members

Juan Casafont
Beverly Nagel
Tina Flournoy

A three-member team observed the elections in Ciudad del Este and nearby Hernandarias. 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 30 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. Persistent allegations of widespread corruption and malfeasance among local government officials resulted in the temporary suspension of the appointed mayor of Ciudad del Este in March. An intervenor was sent from Asunción to investigate and address these charges; he was abruptly recalled two days before the elections, amid threats to himself and his staff.

Hernandarias is a much older community, dating back to the era when La Industrial Paraguay, the giant Anglo-Argentine *maté* firm, dominated the zone. However, Hernandarias was largely bypassed by the economic boom that stimulated Ciudad del Este's growth, and remains a small, quiet community. Hernandarias is the administrative center for a much larger rural area that has only been settled during the last 25 years. It is estimated that perhaps as much as 60 percent of the rural population consists of Brazilian immigrants and their children. Many of the rural settlements, such as Mbaracayu, are overwhelmingly Brazilian. Residents of these settlements who

maintained legal residency in Paraguay and were otherwise qualified to vote in the municipal elections traveled up to 100 kilometers over dirt roads to vote in Hernandarias.

The Colorado primary elections in both communities were bitterly contested and then suspended. In Ciudad del Este, elections were suspended after youth supporters of one of the mayoral candidates attacked the voting tables, destroying ballot boxes, threatening elections officials and beating several members of the press who attempted to record the incident. Despite the presence of OAS observers, several people were beaten badly enough to require medical attention, and the voting place (the regional primary school) was severely damaged. The police refused to intervene to restore order, and the local military forces had to be called in to control the violence. The candidate whose supporters caused the fracas withdrew his candidacy several days later.

In Hernandarias, voting in the Colorado primary was suspended after supporters of the Renovador and the Alianza factions accused the Autónomo faction of manipulating voter registration lists. The voting was annulled after individuals believed to be supporters of the Autónomo candidate stole six ballot boxes.

In Ciudad del Este and Hernandarias, the Colorado primaries were held one week later, without incident. In both communities, supporters of Colorado factions who lost in the primaries launched independent candidacies. In Hernandarias, the team also heard allegations that fraud and manipulation had occurred in the Liberal Party primaries.

Before the elections, members of the team met with local officials, representatives of the Febrerista Party in Ciudad del Este and representatives of the Authentic Radical Liberal Party in Hernandarias. On election day, team members also met with the PLRA mayoral candidate, two independent mayoral candidates, representatives of the Workers' Party in Ciudad del Este and Colorado Party representatives in Hernandarias.

The local officials were most concerned with issues of public order during the elections and corruption within the local ruling Colorado faction. Though the campaigns were conducted freely and openly, party representatives raised several concerns. The Febrerista representatives had received reports that Colorado *cedulas* were being offered for sale at a cost of 50,000 *guaranies* (about U.S.\$40). The

Febreristas also reported that the electoral board, with the assent of party representatives, had assigned election officials to voting tables in a manner that contradicted the electoral code. Whereas the code requires that the presidents and electoral officials of the polling sites represent different political parties, the assignments were distributed such that the Liberals had two representatives on some tables, the Febreristas had two representatives on others, and the Colorados dominated still others. While this irregularity might provide the opportunity for fraud, or at least for manipulation, the Febrerista representatives did not believe it gave a clear advantage to the Colorados.

At the time of the delegation visit, the parties were most concerned that the official voter registration lists had yet to be received by the local electoral board. This situation meant that the parties were going to have no opportunity to review them. At 5:30 p.m. on the day preceding the elections, officials from the local electoral board assured our team that the registration lists had arrived. However, after meeting with the electoral official, the team walked across the street to the polling site, where the secretary of the local electoral board informed us they had not yet received the lists.

ELECTION DAY

The team arrived at the polling place just before 7 a.m. on election day. All 226 polling tables for Ciudad del Este were located at this single polling site. Upon arrival, we were informed that the registries had not been received until 4:30 a.m. As a result, few of the tables had been set up, and officials were just beginning to distribute ballot boxes and other elections materials. By 7:30 a.m., some voters had already been admitted into the polling place, but the lists were still being distributed. At a few tables, voting began at 8:30 a.m.; however, others were unable to commence voting until 10:30 a.m.

At 7:45 a.m., a meeting of the candidates for mayor and their *apoderados* was called. Seven candidates for mayor had been approved, but an eighth name appeared on the ballots. The eighth candidate, the team was informed, had lost in the Colorado primaries. When he applied to run as an independent, his candidacy was rejected by the local electoral court due to his recent political party affiliation. He had appealed the rejection to the Supreme Court, but the Court

had not yet acted on his appeal. Considerable discussion ensued, and the local electoral board decided that the president of each polling site should cross out the candidate's name on the ballots as they were handed to the voters.

By noon, the board reversed itself and ruled that the name of the eighth candidate should remain on the ballot, and the presidents were so instructed. Ballots on which the eighth candidate's name had been crossed out were annulled during the counting process.

Voters in Ciudad del Este faced considerable chaos in locating the table at which they would be able to vote. An information table was set up at the entrance to the polling place to direct voters to the appropriate tables. Inside the polling place, political party representatives attempted to help voters locate their tables. In spite of this assistance, many voters were unable to find their names on the lists. Many others found that their names appeared on the voter registration list of a location other than the one at which they had registered. One member of our team accompanied two voters as they attempted to vote. The voters were directed to four different tables before locating the one at which their names appeared. In all, it took 1½ hours for these two individuals to determine where to vote, and three minutes to actually vote. Along the way, we encountered several voters who had simply given up after making several failed attempts to find their names.

The gates to the polling place were closed by the military and police at 5 p.m. Officials immediately began the counting process. As a result, several voters who were still searching for their table were unable to vote.

In Hernandarias, voting took place at 65 tables located in three adjacent schools. Although some people complained of problems with the registration lists, the voting seemed less chaotic than in Ciudad del Este. However, when team members arrived in the morning, we were informed that the lists had not arrived until 5:30 a.m., and the lists containing the names of resident foreigners had not arrived at all. Officials estimated that between 800 and 1000 foreigners, nearly all Brazilian-born residents of Paraguay, were registered to vote in Hernandarias. When several truckloads of these voters arrived from Mbaracayu, some 100 kilometers away by dirt road, they were told that the voter lists for foreigners would be flown in by noon. The lists never arrived, however, and the Brazilians

were instructed simply to sign a register indicating that they had attempted to vote, an electoral law requirement.

Although this incident may seem minor when viewed from a national perspective, in the social and political context of Alto Paraná it holds considerable significance. During the Stroessner years, Brazilian residents were often harassed by officials and still remain the target of nationalistic rhetoric by opposition parties. More than likely, the failure to deliver foreign registries stemmed from poor organization and was not an intentional slight against the foreign residents of Alto Paraná. Nevertheless, many foreigners question the willingness of government officials to protect their legal rights. This impression was undoubtedly reinforced when problems with the registration of foreign voters emerged throughout Alto Paraná, resulting in the suspension of voting in many communities.

The team returned to Ciudad del Este to observe the ballot counting. This process was uneventful. All of the major parties, as well as some of the minor ones and independent movements, fielded *apoderados* and pollwatchers throughout the day. Although placing all 226 booths in one location certainly contributed to voter confusion, it also helped small parties and movements better monitor the election process. Small parties would not have been able to cover a more dispersed system.

The team was warmly welcomed by officials and party representatives alike. We were impressed by the enthusiasm of all participants in the process and especially by the dedication and enthusiasm of the voters themselves, who often travelled long distances and spent hours searching for the table at which they could vote.

Prepared by Beverly Nagel

CONCEPCION, HORQUETA, AND LORETO

Team Members

Jeffrey Bergner
Julio Faesler
Steven Griner
Elizabeth McIninch

BACKGROUND

A four-member team visited the department of Concepción in which six municipal elections took place: one in the capital city of Concepción and five in smaller towns throughout the region. Three of the sites were located a long distance from the capital, so the team concentrated its efforts in Concepción, Horqueta and Loreto.

Five candidates contested the mayoral race in Concepción. The Colorado Party candidate had defeated two other candidates, including the current mayor, for the party's nomination. The other candidates were drawn from the PLRA, the Febrerista Party, and two unaffiliated campaigns.

The day before the elections, the team met separately with four of the five candidates and their political party advisors. Most of the opposition candidates expected a disorganized electoral registry but anticipated minimal election-day fraud. Only the Febrerista candidate feared election-day fraud and violence.

Some candidates expressed concern about one of the independent candidacies, claiming that the candidate was actually a disenfranchised Colorado Party member. This candidacy was previously challenged, but then allowed after party representatives and candidates discussed the matter with the OAS observers in the region.

No one worried about the possibility of military interference on election day. The candidates and the electoral officials welcomed observers and all expressed faith in their neutrality.

The observers also met with members of the local electoral board, members of the local electoral court, the mayor, and the officer from the Ministry of Interior in charge of security for the department. Even though the board and court members were from different parties, everyone knew and trusted one another. Indelible ink was flown in the day before the elections on the last flight out of Asunción, thus assuming an adequate supply to all polling areas.

ELECTION DAY

In Concepción, all polling tables were located at the same school. The polls opened on time there, and the voting process was well-organized. Voting tables were well marked, and several electoral Officials were available to guide voters to the correct area. The Colorado Party maintained a parallel assistance system, presumably

for its own voters, though it was difficult to determine which voters would necessarily vote for the Colorado Party.

Polling tables were adequately supplied with ballots, a ballot box and indelible ink. Each voting table was operated by three officials, each drawn from a competing political party; the leader of the voting table was selected by lot.

People experienced few difficulties in voting. Initially, voting took no more than five minutes. By late morning the lines lengthened to perhaps 15 people, requiring 30 to 45 minutes to complete the voting process. Lines dwindled by the afternoon.

Voting took place without incident, although some isolated problems were reported. Some individuals, who had registered, could not vote because their name did not appear on the list. The observer delegation witnessed at least 10 such cases.

Dispute also arose when a voter who was believed to be a resident of another municipality tried to vote. Since he presented the necessary documentation and his name appeared on the registry, he was allowed to cast his ballot. Even though no one knew this person, the electoral officials at the voting point reasoned that it would be unfair to require of the voter further proof of residency if he already presented the necessary documentation.

In another incident, PLRA officials physically brought a Colorado supporter into the local electoral office complaining that she had been campaigning inside the polling areas, a clear violation of the electoral law. Apparently, the woman was carrying a copy of the official ballot that was marked for the Colorado candidate. Despite a loud argument, no official complaint was lodged. The president of the local electoral board, a Colorado Party member, asked everyone to leave the office before any official action could be taken. The woman left with the ballot and was not seen again.

In many other cases individuals came to Concepción under the mistaken assumption that they were registered there. They were turned away, however, because their names did not appear on the registry. Affidavits testifying that an effort had been made to vote were issued freely to anyone who requested one. Since voting in Paraguay is obligatory, these affidavits were necessary for a citizen to receive future government services.

Many Brazilians and some Argentines live in the Concepción area and, although they were by law permitted to vote, the registration list for foreigners did not arrive in any of the three sites observed. All of the foreigners were obliged to obtain the affidavit stating that an attempt to vote had been made. The foreigners with whom observers spoke did not believe that they were deliberately disenfranchised, rather they attributed their fate to a disorganized voter registry.

The quality of the registration lists remains an issue to be addressed. Ideally, all voters should be registered so that no one can be turned away on the basis of a poorly assembled voter roster. Although most people voted with minimal difficulty, this was not always the case. Continual efforts are required to expand and improve the voter registration lists.

In all three municipalities, observers noted that the last names of the voters were listed on the registry next to their place of origin, the latter curiously organized in blocks such that it appeared that everyone with the same last name was born in the same city. Only when the block of names changed did the place of origin correspondingly change. Observers never received a satisfactory explanation concerning this anomaly. This apparent inaccuracy made it impossible to confirm a voter's identity by comparing the addresses, a situation that added to suspicions that voter registration lists were less than accurate.

Well-armed police provided security for the elections. In Concepción, they were stationed apart from the tables and did not intimidate anyone. In Loreto, police were placed near each voting table. When asked about this presence so close to the voting, the major in charge replied that a rumor had been spread that someone might attempt to steal a ballot box. The people of Loreto seemed unconcerned about the close presence of the police force.

THE COUNT

Polls closed promptly at 5 p.m. Votes were counted in front of all the party pollwatchers, as well as in the presence of electoral officials and OAS and NDI observers. A few military officers also approached some of the tables and carefully observed the count. No one, save the observers, seemed to care about or even notice this activity. No irregularities were detected in the counting process.

Each poll forwarded its results to the election board officials nearby, who added together the totals from all of the tables.

In anticipation of a close vote, two team members remained in Loreto throughout the counting process. In this municipality, only two candidates ran for mayor: a candidate supported by an alliance of the PLRA, Febreristas and independents and a candidate representing the Colorado Party.

As in Concepción, polls closed promptly at 5 p.m. Votes were counted and totaled by about 8 p.m. (Since Loreto had only 3,000 registered voters as opposed to 16,000 in Concepción, the count was completed much sooner than in the capital city.) The outcome in Loreto was indeed close: Colorado - 945; PLRA - 942. The Liberal Party officials checked and re-checked the tally sheets, and finally accepted the outcome.

REFLECTIONS

Voters showed considerable interest and enthusiasm in the process. Despite the occasional irregularities cited and occasional concerns raised about voters not being allowed to vote, the process was satisfactory in the three cities the team observed.

Several general observations, however, can be made. The first relates to the already mentioned need to improve voter registration lists. In the Concepción area, the OAS observers were particularly active before election day in rectifying disputes concerning inaccuracies in the voter registry. All parties were given access to the OAS computer and fax machines and many conflicts were resolved in the OAS office before May 26. All parties accepted the neutrality of the OAS observers and readily implemented their suggestions. One wonders if such disputes would have been so amicably resolved without outside assistance.

The second observation relates to the need for civic education, specifically a program to inform voters how to properly mark a ballot. Many ballots were nullified because voters apparently did not know how to correctly indicate their choice. Some ballots had marks for several candidates, others had marks outside the printed boxes next to the candidates' names, and still others contained lines or marks that were impossible to decipher. Many were blank. In Loreto, the observers saw dozens of incorrectly marked (and consequently invalid) ballots. Considering the margin of victory in

Loreto was a mere three votes, the nullified ballots could have changed the outcome of the elections. A modest education program that relates to the voter simple ballot instructions would undoubtedly lower the percentage of invalid ballots.

The team also looked carefully at the process of bringing people in to the city by truck and bus from the countryside. Concerns arose that the far greater resources of the Colorado Party might give it a decided advantage over the less endowed parties. However, the team observed that the PLRA was also proficient at this technique, and on the whole, competitive. In addition, several members of different parties commented that if the political parties had not transported voters from the countryside, there would have been literally no way for them to vote.

The best measure of the fairness of the elections was the overall support for the electoral process demonstrated by the party leaders and candidates, particularly those on the losing side. In Concepción, there was a general sense from all parties that the elections were a success and that Paraguay had taken another large step toward democratic government.

Prepared by Steven Griner

CARAPEGUA

Team Members

Johanna Mendelson
Louis Goodman
David Forman

A three-member team observed elections in Carapegua, an agricultural town 80 kilometers from Asunción. It is an area of important cattle, sugar cane and timber production. The city has a population of 32,000, with a voting district that embraces rural communities up to 25 kilometers from the center of town. In 1991 about 11,000 individuals were registered to vote in that municipality.

Carapegua was selected for observation because allegations of fraud and irregularities there had led to the postponement of hotly

contested primary elections. An NDI team visited Carapegua after the cancellation of the primary and reported great concern on the part of the opposition who feared that the Colorado Party might attempt to steal the elections through fraud.

The day before the municipal elections, the observer team visited Carapegua and talked with opposition candidates.

Although the first meeting scheduled was with Longino Cabello, the Colorado Party candidate for mayor, Cabello actively hid to avoid talking with the observer team. Attempts throughout the day to make contact with him were unsuccessful. It was not until after all the polls had closed on election day that Cabello finally appeared at one of the polling centers to "greet" the international observers.

The opposition candidates expressed reservations that the voting would be marred by fraud. Their fears were based on a belief that the PLRA party, which had grown nationally from 80,000 members in 1989 to more than 450,000 in 1991, could present a formidable challenge to the Colorado machine in the region.

In a meeting with the delegation, Tranquilino Adorno, the PLRA candidate, and his supporters described the types of massive fraud that the Colorado Party had previously practiced in the region. One allegation claimed that the Colorados had hired two forgers to come to Carapegua to produce counterfeit identification cards so that unregistered individuals could be provided instantly with the requisite identification for voting.

The independent candidate, Aristides Gonzalez, distributed materials to his pollwatchers describing the most common kinds of electoral fraud that were anticipated. He, too, was cognizant of the types of illegal practices that Colorado machine politicians had used to maintain their hold on political power.

Gonzalez presented an illuminating story as to how he had become a candidate. Gonzalez, a teacher and president of the teacher's union, was a member of the Colorado Party, but was not active in party politics. He said that when he went to the polls to vote in the Colorado primary, his name was not on the voter rolls. When he protested, he was taken outside and badly beaten. It was this beating that sparked his resolve to run as an independent.

Gonzalez then related the difficulties he faced in order to place his name on the ballot for the May 26 elections. Although Gonzalez

followed the petitioning procedures under the electoral laws, his candidacy was rejected by the local election tribunal. Undaunted by this set-back, he petitioned the Central Electoral Tribunal in Asunción for inclusion on the ballot. Gonzalez was told that he would be allowed to run as an independent candidate, but when he returned to the tribunal office to provide his photograph, he was told that his application was missing. It was only through persistence, and a return trip to Carapegua where he had kept copies of all the documents, that Gonzalez was able to repeat the process, this time successfully, of filing his candidacy.

The scene at the Central Electoral Tribunal that Gonzalez described was one of total chaos. Official papers were strewn about everywhere. Staff members working on ballot preparation appeared disorganized and confused. Others who visited the Central Electoral Tribunal related similar descriptions.

The president of the local electoral board in Carapegua, Enrique Cabrera, was also a Colorado Party official for whom the opposition expressed great disdain. Although the board was supposed to be representative of all parties, Cabrera used his home as the electoral board headquarters, even though the national government provided funding to rent office space in town. By using his home for his office, Cabrera could not only pay himself rent for the office space, but he could control the hours of board operation as well. Opposition leaders believed that this situation was a deliberate effort to undermine their ability to operate.

When we interviewed Cabrera at this home/office, he complained that the registries had arrived only that afternoon. Thus, the process of checking the rolls for accuracy would be almost impossible to complete before the polls opened the next morning. He also confirmed that fewer people appeared on the rolls than had actually been registered, due to errors and deletions he attributed to actions taken by the Central Election Board in Asunción.

ELECTION DAY

On election day, two polling sites totaling 56 tables were set up at two schools, the Colegio Alfonso XIII and the Escuela Nicaragua, located on the same city block. Although the polls opened at 7 a.m., it was not until about 8:30 a.m. that a significant number of voters appeared. By that time, trucks carrying people from the rural areas

were beginning to enter the city. Those being trucked in by the Colorado Party came attired in red; those transported by the PLRA wore blue.

Early in the day a truckload of military police appeared at the polling site. The young officer in charge immediately sought out the observer team and informed us that the troops were there to protect us and to insure peaceful elections. The troops then kept a very low profile, and we saw no evidence of any military interference or intimidation.

At the polls, many people discovered that even though they had their registration receipt, they were not listed on the election rolls. The party pollwatchers were helpful in resolving these problems, though we did see people turned away because they could produce neither a registration receipt nor find their names on the roster. The fact that more than half the registered voters in this district were illiterate complicated this situation.

At one point on election morning, a confrontation arose when a Colorado *apoderado* began removing official ballots from the polling site to show potential voters waiting outside how to vote. Opposition and independent candidate *apoderados* started a screaming match, but ultimately the Colorados got their way. When we visited the Colorado Party headquarters on election day, we saw many ballots strewn on the floor, an indication that a massive "voter education" effort had been underway before transporting people to the polls.

In spite of the opposition predictions, the team saw no evidence of massive fraud. For example, at some voting tables, pollwatchers had picked up phony *cedulas* (in one case a voter had inserted a new photo into the old *cedula*), but the day was notable for its lack of incidents and by the overall festive atmosphere that accompanied the voting. Even at the peak of the voting, around 12 noon to 2 p.m., when many tables had lines more than 20 people long, voters were calm and patient.

Perhaps the Bishop of Carapegua, Celso Yegras Estigarribia, best expressed the situation in his community when he told us that while voting was not new in Paraguay, what was happening on this day was novel. Paraguayans were experiencing free elections.

By 4 p.m., one hour before the polls were to close, a check at both schools indicated a high turnout. At many tables, between 75 and 80 percent of those registered had already voted. Also at this

time, Colorado Party boss Enrique Gonzalez made an appearance at the polling sites. His presence created quite a stir among the opposition leaders. Rumors arose of an impending effort to take the election by fraud, since the high turnout indicated trouble for the Colorado Party. We observed no obvious vote-tampering, however.

At 5 p.m., the polls closed. The Paraguay military units, which had remained in the background throughout the day, now moved in to seal the polling area so that the vote count could begin. Two factors complicated the process of counting ballots. First, many electoral officials were unsure of exactly how to count the ballots, and so the tallying got off to a slow start until a system was created. Second, by 5:30 p.m. it was quite dark, yet the two schools had only limited lighting. Vote counters had to move their tables to one of the few areas at the polling site where a lone fluorescent lamp shone. At some tables, counters managed to find a candle, while others jerry-rigged flashlights. No one had anticipated this problem. Despite the adverse conditions, the vote count proceeded with general good humor, and by 8 p.m. the ballot boxes were ready to be carried to the local electoral board.

As the parade of pollwatchers and electoral officials marched to the home of the local board president, escorted by the military police, it was obvious that the Colorado official who designated his home as the board office was having second thoughts about his decision. More than 300 people jammed the doorway, and military guards were brought in to keep order. There was no violence, but there were crowds of impatient electoral officials anxious to file results.

Before leaving Carapegua on election night we visited the PLRA headquarters. It was anticipated that the PLRA would fare well with such a heavy turnout. Based on a survey of the polling sites, PLRA pollwatchers believed that their candidate had lost by only 130 votes. The combined vote of the opposition PLRA and independent candidate was considerably larger than that of the Colorados — a figure that also caused the local Colorados to realize their monopoly on the local voters was no longer assured.

An unofficial count of the vote on election night produced a narrow victory to the Colorados, but the close results also reinforced

the resolve of the PLRA and the opposition to pursue their political goals of organizing and educating voters.

Prepared by Johanna Mendelson

ASUNCION

Team Members

Team 1: Andrés Pastrana
Bruce Morrison
Suzy George

Team 2: B.A. "Al" Graham
Miles Fitzpatrick
Mark Feierstein

The delegates who remained in Asunción divided into two teams. One team observed the balloting and counting in Asunción and outlying areas. The second team visited a few polling sites in Asunción, but spent most of the day meeting with election officials and party leaders about the chaos that beset election-day activities in the capital.

The first team visited several polling sites within Asunción and surrounding areas throughout the day. A few of the sites in the early morning experienced technical problems that delayed the start of balloting. In some cases, the ballots and supplies arrived late and in others the election officials were slow in setting up each table. Party representatives at each polling site worked together to expedite the process. Due to the delays in opening, by early morning there were already long lines of potential voters; most waited patiently.

Sites visited later in the day were increasingly more hectic, and lines at that time grew to more than 50 people long. The team was approached by several individuals who were registered but were unable to find their names on the registration lists. Many of these voters described being sent to polling sites more than an hour from their homes or having husbands and wives who were on lists at different sites. In addition, some said they had been sent back and forth between three or four sites and still were unable to locate their

names on registration lists. At some of the sites, the political parties, primarily the Colorados, set up informational booths inside the polling places to help voters find their polling sites. In actuality these stations were used for campaigning inside the sites, an illegal activity. When a voter could not locate his or her site, he or she was told to sign a form verifying a good faith attempt to vote. The polling site at Caacupe, outside of Asunción in the department of Paraguari, represented the worst example of these problems.

Many of the polling sites remained open after 5 p.m. because they had opened late. The team observed the counting process at San Pablo inside Asunción. The counting was a very long process and difficulty with lighting was encountered at several voting tables. The workers were exceptionally diligent with the counting and few disputes arose over the process.

The second group visited two polling sites in Asunción in the morning. At those sites, and at others throughout the city, according to reports from other observers and the Paraguayan media, thousands of voters were being disenfranchised because their names did not appear on the registration lists. Many people spent hours looking for their names at different polling sites, but to no avail. At some sites, up to 50 percent of the people who arrived to vote could not do so because their names did not appear on the registries. At one polling site in Luque, a town outside of Asunción, the elections were suspended because voting materials did not arrive. As a result of these anomalies, many voters began denouncing the elections as fraudulent, some drawing comparisons with elections held under former President Alfredo Stroessner.

By late morning, most opposition political parties were denouncing the process. Although instances of fraud were cited that benefitted the Colorado Party, such as the buying and alteration of registration cards, such cases were "widespread, but not massive," one Liberal representative concluded. The problems with the registration lists affected all parties equally, PLRA members believed.

At about noon, President Rodriguez went to the Central Electoral Board, where he met with board president Jose Luis Ibarra Llano. The focus of their discussion was not publicly disclosed.

In the early afternoon, the opposition parties met in the headquarters of the Febrerista Party to consider requesting that the elections be suspended and rescheduled. The argument appeared to

have merit. Given the chaos at the polling sites and the disenfranchisement of so many voters, it was feared that the election results would not be accepted. Eventually, every opposition party, except the PLRA, signed a document calling for the suspension of the elections. By the time the document was issued, about 5 p.m., the vote count was about to begin in many polling sites. The government and the Central Electoral Board never responded publicly to the parties' request.

Carlos Filizzola's Asunción for All Movement did not support the call for a suspension, even though in the morning the movement representatives denounced the elections as fraudulent. By mid-afternoon, exit polls indicated that Filizzola would be elected mayor.

Counting at the sites visited by both teams took place in accordance with the electoral law and without any serious disputes. The teams did not receive any reports from elsewhere in Asunción regarding irregularities during the counting process.

Once official results became available, indicating that Filizzola would win handily, calls for suspending the elections ceased. Had the Colorado mayoral candidate emerged victorious, however, it is likely the entire opposition would have protested the results because of irregularities. Filizzola's victory demonstrated that the irregularities were probably not engineered by the government or, if they were, they were not significant enough to change the results.

Prepared by Mark Feierstein and Suzy George

PEDRO JUAN CABALLERO

Team Members

Agustín Jarquín
Rita DiMartino
Donna Huffman

A three-member team observed the elections in Pedro Juan Caballero, the third largest city in Paraguay with an estimated population of 80,000. Pedro Juan Caballero is situated 226 miles northeast of Asunción, on the border with Brazil. The frontier at

Pedro Juan Caballero is one of the most open between Paraguay and Brazil, with only a grass-lined street, similar to any other street in the middle of a town, separating the two countries. There is no official check point or passport control to cross, nor is there even a sign indicating entrance to a different country. Brazilian currency is widely accepted in the area, but Paraguayan currency cannot be used in the Brazilian shops across the street.

It is this open frontier between the two countries that has contributed to Pedro Juan Caballero's becoming a conduit for contraband and drugs. Earlier in the year, the murder of a reporter was first thought to be politically motivated, but was later determined to be drug-related. Unemployment, along with the drug and contraband trafficking, are perceived by most we met with to be among the most pressing social issues facing the region.

The day before the elections, the team met with candidates from the leading political parties. In addition, the team met with the mayor of Pedro Juan Caballero, a local Ministry of Interior official, the president of the local electoral board and OAS representatives.

Several opposition candidates expressed concerns about *cedula* and vote-buying in the city. Some opposition supporters placed the number of bought *cedulas* as high as 2,000 and others claimed that vote-buying was a widespread practice in the region. In addition, opposition members charged that Brazilians with dual Brazilian and Paraguayan citizenship might try to vote in these elections. These individuals live and work in Brazil, but also retain Paraguayan citizenship. The opposition alleged that they are paid to vote for specific candidates in Paraguayan elections. They claimed that the open border between the two countries makes it easy for foreigners to enter on election day, vote and leave.

Opposition members raised concerns about the use of fraudulent or altered *cedulas*. Although new tamper-proof *cedulas* existed, they were not used in these elections. Opposition members also expected confusion with the voter registration lists, but anticipated no election day or election-related violence.

The Colorado mayoral candidate in Pedro Juan Caballero raised the only complaint of intimidation. He related to us that he had received death threats over the phone, but he did not know who was responsible for the threats. The threats did not prevent him from participating in the elections.

During the teams' meeting with the president of the local election board, a board staff member informed the president that several boxes of ballots had been taken from the airport shortly after the plane landed. Furthermore, the ballots were seen being loaded into and driven away in a Colorado Party supporter's car. The ballots were later recovered.

The polling in Pedro Juan Caballero took place in one central location, a school. We were able to watch the election officials finish their final preparations, which included sorting the voter registration lists and ballots and grouping them for the individual voting tables, and assembling the ballot boxes and voting booths. Although it was already late afternoon, it appeared that the election board still had a lot of work to do before it would be able to distribute the voting materials to the individual polls the next day.

On election eve we met with OAS representatives who expressed concern about the next day's balloting. The OAS team had been assigned to monitor the voting process in Pedro Juan Caballero and two surrounding cities in the area. Throughout the day they had heard rumors and allegations of planned election-related fraud and violence, and had real concerns about the possible disruption of the process.

ELECTION DAY

At the school, 93 tables accommodated all voters from within a 50-mile radius. Since the region is chiefly an agricultural area, many voters lived outside the city and had to be collectively transported to the polls. As we drove around the city and surrounding area, we observed trucks and buses carrying many people, most of whom were wearing or waving some form of party identification.

The team arrived at the voting site shortly before 7 a.m. and found that several tables had not received all of their supplies. Many tables were short ballots, while others lacked various materials, such as tape to seal the ballot box. One observer witnessed the president of the local election board taking notes of missing items at each of the voting tables and promising the officials that the supplies would arrive shortly. By 8:30 a.m. voting was underway at practically every table. Voting was very light at first, but by late morning lines formed at most tables. The Colorado Party and the PLRA fielded

pollwatchers at every voting table; the smaller parties were also well represented.

As expected, problems were rampant with the voter registration lists. The team noted that a high number of people who were turned away because their names did not appear on the list. The president of the local electoral board set up his headquarters on the school grounds; all problems or questionable issues were sent directly to him.

Issues also arose involving *cedulas*. In a few instances, questionable *cedulas* were confiscated and complaints were filed. The holders of these *cedulas* were not permitted to vote. In one case, two men thought to possess fraudulent *cedulas* were taken to appear before a judge. They later returned and threatened the president who first confiscated their *cedulas*. The police were summoned to remove the men, and a heavy police presence remained at that voting table for the remainder of the balloting process.

One man was also turned away because a number on his *cedula* did not correspond to his number on the voter registration list. He presented his case to the local electoral court president who instructed the president of the voting table to allow the man to vote, which he did. At another poll where a voter's *cedula* was suspected of being fraudulent, the person was allowed to vote, but his *cedula* was confiscated and an official complaint was filed.

Other irregularities included a Brazilian television crew filming a man voting, and a woman being shown how to vote by her husband. When confronted by pollwatchers, the man replied that he was only helping his wife and he could show her how to vote if he wanted.

In another instance, a team member watched as a pollwatcher standing next to the voting booth began to instruct a voter on how to vote. The president of the local electoral board also happened to be passing by and observed the incident. The president strongly reprimanded the pollwatcher, as well as the president of the voting poll for not better monitoring the pollwatchers.

When the balloting ended at 5 p.m., very few people remained in line to vote, all of whom were permitted to vote. The only delay took place at the poll where the previously mentioned trouble with the *cedulas* and subsequent threats of violence occurred. The balloting

did not conclude at this poll until 8:30 p.m. Since it was dark by this time, the ballots were removed to a lighted area to be counted.

THE COUNT

A preliminary check at around 4 p.m. by the NDI team revealed a high voter turnout: 70 to 80 percent of registered voters. As the official count began, the military presence, which had been in evidence throughout the day, increased, but had no impact on the counting process. The count proceeded as prescribed and the team members noted problems. Pedro Juan Caballero was part of the SAKA parallel vote count, and the volunteers gathering results from SAKA were highly visible throughout the balloting and counting process.

The counting process revealed the need for voter education. Team members noted a high number of blank and incorrectly marked ballots. It appeared that people simply did not understand the proper procedures for marking the ballot. Voters tried to cast valid votes, but simply marked the wrong spots. In some instances, a mark was placed by the candidate's picture; in others the mark was placed under the candidate's box, and still in other cases the candidate's whole box was circled. On the whole, the table officials attempted to explain to the voters where to place the mark when they handed them the ballots, but several voters still marked their ballots incorrectly.

Election officials at the individual polling sites ruled on the validity of questionably marked ballots. In almost all cases, they interpreted the marks in a conservative fashion. That is, all ballots were considered invalid unless they were marked anywhere except within the designated area, no matter how clear for whom the vote was intended. This strict interpretation was the only course to take to avoid partisan wrangling over what certain marks meant or didn't mean. It also affected all candidates equally, which helped alleviate any consideration of intentional ballot manipulation.

CONCLUSIONS

Overall, the elections demonstrated a great deal of voter participation and enthusiasm. Turnout was high, and many people remained at the polling site to observe the process throughout the day. The PLRA candidate, Filemon Valdez, won by a substantial majority; the Colorado candidate finished second.

Most of the opposition's fears of fraud did not materialize, and despite occasional irregularities and administrative problems, the team believed that the electoral process in Pedro Juan Caballero was open and fair. The team heard of no protest of the results, nor did they see any signs of potential violence on the part of any of the losing parties.

Certain observations about the process can be made, however. An effort should be made to improve the voter registration list in time for the next elections. Although they had no significant impact on the overall outcome of the process, inaccuracies in the list caused a substantial amount of confusion and delay.

Voter education should be made a priority. The number of incorrectly marked or blank ballots was extremely high, a situation that could change the outcome of a close race.

A streamlined system for distributing the voting materials should be designed. Many of the delays in opening the polls were caused by a shortage of ballots and other materials. Since the local election board did not have time to properly check the distribution of materials, a more organized arrangement would facilitate dispersement.

Prepared by Donna Huffman

Appendix VIII

Post-Election Statement

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

May 27, 1991
Asunción, Paraguay

We are pleased to offer a statement on behalf of the international observer delegation sponsored by the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs. This delegation, which consists of 16 members from eight countries, yesterday witnessed Paraguay's municipal elections.

The delegation observed the balloting and counting in five major cities — Asunción, Carapegua, Ciudad del Este, Concepción and Pedro Juan Caballero — as well as in smaller surrounding towns. Because these elections were local, we have focused our efforts on observing and gathering information on about 10 of the municipal elections held yesterday. This statement represents a consensus view of our observations. In the next few weeks, we will prepare a detailed report and issue it publicly.

We realize that we have witnessed an historic event, Paraguay's first mayoral elections. Paraguayans responded enthusiastically to the opportunity to elect their mayors. Political parties and independent movements organized throughout the country to campaign and monitor the elections. Civic organizations also were active, encouraging people to vote, distributing information on the electoral process and the candidates, organizing civic education programs and conducting parallel vote counts. On election day, voter turnout was high. In the face of frequent confusion, voters went to great lengths to exercise their right to vote. Many of our delegates observed a festive atmosphere and a high degree of cooperation among the parties and electoral officials.

Shortcomings existed, however, in the administrative preparations for the elections. This was evident on election day, which was marked by confusion and chaos in many areas. In about 20 municipalities, the elections were suspended because materials did

not arrive in time or did not arrive at all. In other areas, voting began up to four hours late because of the late arrival of electoral materials. As a result, many voters became discouraged and left before the balloting began. In Pedro Juan Caballero, the delegation saw ballots that did not include all the candidates. In Ciudad del Este, a candidate who had been challenged and had appealed the challenge was crossed out on the ballots until midday, when the local electoral board ruled that he should remain on the ballot.

Perhaps the most serious problem was the disenfranchisement of people who could not get accurate information about where to vote or whose names did not appear on the electoral registries where they believed they were supposed to vote. Precise figures are not available on the number of people who were disenfranchised in that way; but the delegation was told by party pollwatchers in some polling sites that a significant percentage of the people who arrived to vote were unable to because their names did not appear on the registries.

The political parties believe that these irregularities were mostly administrative in nature and were not engineered in favor of or against a particular candidate or party. All parties were affected. The election results would appear to discredit any charges that the irregularities were politically motivated.

The delegation has heard allegations of other irregularities as well, such as the buying of *cedulas*, the alteration of *cedulas*, people voting in areas where they do not reside and the existence of pre-marked ballots. We have not seen documentation of these practices. Their effect on the process, if they did occur, is believed to have been marginal.

The dedicated members and staffs of the electoral boards and tribunals, who worked tirelessly so that these elections would take place, recognize that there were administrative deficiencies. Electoral officials and political leaders acknowledge that the electoral law, which is considered fair but imprecise, needs to be amended. We are confident that political leaders and members of the electoral bodies have learned a great deal from this process and are prepared to introduce measures to improve the administration of elections in the future. Electoral officials will face their next test later this year, when elections for a constituent assembly are to be held.

Despite the administrative flaws in this electoral process, the holding of the elections represents another important step in

Paraguay's efforts to consolidate its nascent democracy. For the first time in Paraguayan history, the citizenry elected its mayors. Paraguay's local governments are now representative of the country's political spectrum. The newly elected city councils will provide forums to democratically debate and determine public policies that affect Paraguayans daily. The electoral results and the political parties' acceptance of them demonstrate that Paraguayans are committed to the democratic process. Paraguayan political analysts note that the results and the splitting of ballots portend the development of a more pluralistic political system and attest to the sophistication of Paraguayan voters despite having been deprived of their democratic rights for years.

The democratic progress that Paraguay has made over the past two years is unquestionable. NDI was present in 1989 for the presidential and congressional elections, when President Rodriguez and the Colorado Party won an overwhelming victory following a brief electoral campaign that afforded the political parties little time to organize and campaign. For these municipal elections, the opposition parties participated in the drafting of the electoral law and the administration of the elections. Two NDI pre-election missions, which visited Paraguay in March and April, concluded that no restrictions were placed on the parties' ability to operate. A vigorous and responsible press also contributed to the process by reporting about all aspects of the elections.

We have all learned a great deal from this experience. The Paraguayan people have taught us lessons that will prove instructive for the people in our own countries. We thank the Paraguayan government, the political parties and all those who shared their views about their country with us, and look forward to receiving an invitation to return in the near future.

Appendix IX

Press Coverage of NDI Delegation
May, 1991

abc

Asunción, sábado 25 de mayo de 1991

**Otro grupo internacional
vigilará proceso electoral**

Propiciado por instituto de EEUU

Como una muestra de apoyo internacional al proceso de transición de nuestro país y para informar de los acontecimientos de las municipales a la comunidad internacional, participará de los comicios una delegación de observadores organizada por el Instituto Nacional Democrático Para Asuntos Internacionales (NDI) de los EEUU.

En una conferencia de prensa ofrecida por la delegación señalaron que no están aquí para arbitrar ni intervenir en los asuntos internos nacionales. "No pretendemos juzgar el proceso electoral; Paraguay es una nación soberana y orgullosa y sólo estamos aquí para demostrar el apoyo internacional", dijo Al Graham, senador del Parlamento canadiense y uno de los responsables de la delegación.

Acompañan al mismo legisladores, líderes de partidos políticos, expertos electorales y líderes cívicos de Canadá, Costa Rica, Colombia Guyana, México, Nicaragua y Estados Unidos.

Graham explicó que el NDI es un instituto norteamericano que conduce programas no partidarios en más de doce países de Europa, Asia y América Latina y ha ganado reputación por su pericia y neutralidad en asuntos electorales.

La delegación se reunió ayer con líderes políticos, candidatos, miembros de la JEC y otros. Para el trabajo se dividirán en cinco grupos para observar la votación y el escrutinio en Asunción, Ciudad del Este, Concepción, Pedro Juan Caballero y Carapeguá. La misma infor-

mará el lunes sobre las conclusiones de los comicios observados.

CONFIANZA

Agustín Jarquín Anaya, uno de los miembros, dijo que la presencia de los observadores sirve para dar confianza a un electorado incrédulo y para que el Gobierno demuestre buen comportamiento. Interrogado si sólo se limitarán a la observación, el nicaragüense señaló que los observadores no son jueces de los procesos electorales sino más bien una garantía de los mismos.



Responsables de la delegación informaron a la prensa de los objetivos de la misma en los comicios de mañana.

Tres organizaciones observarán comicios

Las primeras elecciones municipales que se realizarán mañana en nuestro país no sólo será controlada en la totalidad de mesas por partidos y sectores de oposición, sino será observada por tres delegaciones internacionales.

En calidad de observadores participarán los de la Organización de Estados Americanos (OEA), Capel y del Instituto Nacional Demócrata para Relaciones Internacionales dependiente del Partido Demócrata de los EEUU.

Igualmente se realizará un conteo paralelo de los votos en Asunción y otros 19 distritos electorales por un consorcio de organizaciones no gubernamentales, denominado Saká (Iniciativa para la transparencia electoral).

Aunque la presencia de observadores internacionales no tiene el peso de la in-

tervención en caso de irregularidades, el informe que proporcionarán al país y a la comunidad internacional sobre los acontecimientos obligará a las autoridades a comportarse adecuadamente a las reglas democráticas.

Sin embargo y a pesar de esto, varios sectores de oposición manifestaron su temor ante probables fraudes

muy comunes en la dictadura anterior y que aún persisten en la conciencia de muchos ciudadanos.

La Junta Electoral Central seguirá hasta hoy elaborando padrones y hasta boletines, según trascendió, retraso causado por la prórroga de inscripción de candidatos solicitada por el Partido Colorado por sus problemas internos.

**DESTACARON SU
NEUTRALIDAD**

Explican el papel de observadores en los comicios municipales

En una conferencia de prensa ofrecida ayer en el Salón Carlos Pellegrini, los observadores que integran el grupo del Instituto Nacional Demócrata para Asuntos Internacionales (NDI por sus siglas en inglés) expresaron las motivaciones que impulsaron al organismo para observar nuestras elecciones municipales. Destacaron la total neutralidad que les anima y resaltaron la importancia del acto comicial a realizarse.

Los componentes de la delegación del NDI que se encuentran en nuestro país para seguir las alternativas de los comicios del domingo, explicaron ayer los motivos de su presencia en nuestro país, a la vez que fueron presentados los colideres de la delegación. La misma está encabezada por el senador canadiense Al Graham, el colombiano Andrés Pastrana y el ex congresista americano Bruce Morrison

El senador Graham explicó que la delegación de observadores que integra no pretende convertirse en árbitro ni intervenir en los asuntos internos del país, así como tampoco juzgar el actual proceso electoral, respetando en un todo la soberanía de nuestra nación. Señaló que la presencia del grupo debe interpretarse

como una muestra de apoyo internacional hacia nuestro proceso democrático y que los observadores se limitarán a reportar sus impresiones del acto comicial a la comunidad internacional.

"Como observadores, no hemos tomado ninguna posición referente a los resultados de las elecciones. Los miembros de nuestra delegación representan al espectro democrático y estamos aquí para demostrar nuestro compromiso con la democracia (paraguaya)", señaló el senador canadiense al clarificar el papel que desempeñarán el domingo.

Puntualizó que el NDI ha ganado una reputación por su pericia y neutralidad en asuntos



Aspecto de la conferencia de prensa ofrecida ayer por los observadores componentes de la delegación del NDI para explicar el papel que desempeñarán durante el acto comicial. Destacaron que actuarán con total neutralidad y respeto a la soberanía paraguaya.

electorales. Asimismo, recaló el interés en el desarrollo de los comicios, pues considera que estas elecciones serán un indicador muy importante del proceso democrático en nuestro país.

A su turno, el colider de la delegación, Andrés Pastrana, señaló que los miembros de la delegación mantuvieron entrevistas con integrantes de la Junta Electoral, candidatos a in-

tendentes y con representantes de los partidos políticos, de modo a forjarse una idea del proceso electoral de nuestro país.

Componen el grupo expertos electorales y líderes cívicos de Canadá, Costa Rica, Colombia, Guyana, México, Nicaragua y E.E. UU. Los mismos integrarán grupos que se trasladarán a Ciudad del Este, Concepción, Pedro Juan Caballero, Carapeguá para seguir las alternativas de los comicios del domingo.

The National Democratic Institute for International Affairs

The National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) was established in 1983. By working with political parties and other institutions, NDI seeks to promote, maintain, and strengthen democratic institutions in new and emerging democracies. The Institute is chaired by former Vice President Walter F. Mondale and is headquartered in Washington, D.C.

NDI has conducted democratic development programs in more than 40 countries. Programs focus on six major areas:

Political Party Training: NDI conducts multipartisan training seminars in political development with a broad spectrum of democratic parties. NDI draws expert trainers from around the world to forums where members of fledgling parties learn first-hand the techniques of organization, communication and constituent contact.

Election Processes: NDI provides technical assistance for political parties and nonpartisan associations to conduct voter and civic education campaigns, and to organize election monitoring programs. The Institute has also organized more than 30 international observer programs.

Legislative Training: In Eastern Europe, Latin American and Africa, NDI has organized legislative seminars focusing on legislative procedures, staffing, research information, constituent services and committee structures.

Local Government: Technical assistance on models of city management has been provided to national legislatures and municipal governments in Central and Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.

Civil Military Relations: NDI brings together military and political leaders to promote dialogue and establish mechanisms for improving civil-military relations.

Civic Education: NDI supports and advises nonpartisan groups and political parties engaged in civic and voter education programs.

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