

**NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTE
FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS**

**THE 1993 NATIONAL ELECTIONS
IN PARAGUAY**

A PRE-ELECTION REPORT

MAY 3, 1993

National Democratic Institute For International Affairs

conducting nonpartisan international programs to help promote, maintain and strengthen democratic institutions



Fifth Floor
1717 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 328-3136
FAX (202) 939-3166
TELEX 5106015068 NDIA

NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTE FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Chairman
Walter F. Mondale

Vice Chair
Rachelle Horowitz

Secretary
Kenneth F. Melley

Treasurer
Marvin F. Weissberg

Finance Chair
Elizabeth F. Bagley

Board of Directors
David L. Aaron
Thomas F. Eagleton
Eugene Eidenberg
Geraldine A. Ferraro
Richard N. Gardner
Marité Hernandez
Robert E. Hunter
Geri M. Joseph
Jan Kalicki
Peter G. Kelly
Penn Kemble
Paul G. Kirk, Jr.
Peter Kovler
Elliott F. Kulick
John Lewis
Leon Lynch
Lewis Manilow
Azie Taylor Morton
Sally Shelton
Mark A. Siegel
Michael R. Steed
Maurice Tempelman
Andrew J. Young

Senior Advisory Committee
Bill Alexander
Michael D. Barnes
John Brademas
Bill Bradley
Richard F. Celeste
Mario M. Cuomo
Patricia M. Derian
Christopher J. Dodd
Michael S. Dukakis
March Fong Eu
Martin Frost
Richard A. Gephardt
John T. Joyce
Mike J. Mansfield
Donald F. McHenry
Daniel Patrick Moynihan
Edmund S. Muskie
Thomas P. O'Neill, Jr.
Bill Richardson
Charles S. Robb
Stephen J. Solarz
Esteban E. Torres
Cyrus R. Vance
Anne Wexler

Chairman Emeritus
Charles T. Manatt

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 U.S. Vice President Walter F. Mondale and is headquartered in Washington, DC.

NDI has supported the development of democratic institutions in more than 50 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 association to conduct voter and civic education campaigns and to organize election monitoring programs. The Institute has also organized more than 20 international observer delegations.

Legislative Training: In Eastern Europe, Latin America 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.

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.

Kenneth D. Wollack-President • Jean B. Dunn-Vice President for Administration & Development

Senior Associates: Patricia Keefer-Political Education • Larry Garber-Election Processes • Thomas O. Melia-Governance • Nelson C. Ledsky-Former Soviet Union



TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I.	INTRODUCTION	1
II.	GEOGRAPHY, DEMOGRAPHY AND THE ECONOMY	2
III.	HISTORICAL BACKGROUND	3
	A. <i>Early Paraguayan History</i>	
	B. <i>The Early 1900s</i>	
	C. <i>Stroessner Era</i>	
	D. <i>Fall of Stroessner</i>	
	E. <i>1989 Elections</i>	
	F. <i>Municipal Elections</i>	
	G. <i>The 1992 Constitution</i>	
IV.	ELECTORAL FRAMEWORK	7
	A. <i>Overview</i>	
	B. <i>Administrative Electoral Bodies</i>	
	C. <i>Voter Registration</i>	
	D. <i>Balloting Process</i>	
	E. <i>Counting Process</i>	
V.	ACTORS IN THE POLITICAL PROCESS	11
	A. <i>Political Parties</i>	
	B. <i>Military</i>	
	C. <i>Church</i>	
	D. <i>Press</i>	
	E. <i>Nongovernmental Organizations</i>	
	F. <i>Organization of American States</i>	
VI.	ELECTORAL ENVIRONMENT	17
	A. <i>Party Primaries</i>	
	B. <i>The Campaign</i>	
VII.	CONCLUSIONS	20

Appendix: Agenda for NDI Survey Mission

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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

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

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

I. INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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

Nevertheless, pre-election developments have created concern about the general elections. The widespread belief that the Colorado Party primaries were fraudulent and the overt support of the military for the winner, Juan C. Wasmosy, caused many to question the Colorado Party's commitment to democracy. Opposition parties also fear that electoral authorities will tamper with the voter registration lists to favor Colorado candidates.

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

carry out civic education programs and has organized seminars to train mayors and members of the city council.

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

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

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

II. GEOGRAPHY, DEMOGRAPHY, AND THE ECONOMY

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

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

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

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

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

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

III. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A. *Early Paraguayan History*

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

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

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

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

B. *The Early 1900s*

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

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

C. *Stroessner Era*

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

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

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

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

D. *Fall of Stroessner*

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

At the same time, the fractious opposition began working more closely together. The National Accord formed in 1979 by four leading opposition parties -- the Authentic Radical Liberal Party (PLRA), the Revolutionary Febrerista Party, the Christian Democrats and the

Popular Colorado Movement (MOPOCO), a Colorado dissident faction -- organized to challenge Stroessner.

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

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

E. 1989 Elections

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

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

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

F. Municipal Elections

In the 1991 municipal elections, the Colorado Party won nearly 75 percent of the mayoral races in the country. Nevertheless, the opposition parties and independent movements made considerable electoral gains, the largest being the victory of independent candidate Carlos Filizzola of the Asunción Para Todos (APT) Movement in Asunción. Many city councils, including that of Asunción, are now divided between the Colorados and the opposition (including independents, the Febreristas and the PLRA). Because of opposition mayoral victories in

heavily populated areas, such as Asunción and the outlying areas, the majority of Paraguayans are now governed by a mayor from an opposition party.

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

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

G. *The 1992 Constitution*

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

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

The new constitution decentralizes government by giving new powers and responsibilities to the municipalities and creating a departmental level of government, comparable to the U.S. state government level.

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

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

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

IV. ELECTORAL FRAMEWORK

A. *Overview*

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

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

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

B. *Administrative Electoral Bodies*

1. Central Electoral Board

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

2. Sectional Electoral Board

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

3. Electoral Tribunal

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

C. *Voter Registration*

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

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

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

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

candidates and party officers. Seven elections in a five-year span have stretched the time and resources of the parties.

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

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

D. *Balloting Process*

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

At the polling table, elections are administered by a three-member board comprised of a president (or *vocal*) and two other electoral officials. In order to qualify as an electoral official, a citizen must be literate and registered in the voting district in which he or she is to serve as an official. A candidate cannot be an electoral official. The electoral code was modified in March to stipulate that the board be composed of two appointed members, one by the Colorado Party and the other by the PLRA, and one member selected by lottery from a pool of candidates from the remaining parties. The three officials are required to open the polling site. If the officials are not present, however, the members of the JES are to open the polling site and oversee the voting.

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

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

an attempt to safeguard against voter fraud. Opposition members counter that the modifications will impede the selection of polling officials and pollwatchers.

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

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

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

E. *Counting Process*

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

When the names of those who voted are verified from the registry, the president, with the help of other officials, opens the ballots and places them in stacks, according to party. Each stack is counted by election officials at the table in the presence of party pollwatchers and anyone else who wishes to observe. The results and any comments and objections from pollwatchers are recorded on the *acta*. Each party pollwatcher receives an official *acta* on which to mark the results.

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

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

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

V. ACTORS IN THE POLITICAL PROCESS

A. *Political Parties*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The PLRA is best known for its charismatic and courageous leader, Domingo Laíno, who was a vocal critic of Stroessner and suffered numerous arrests and exile. Despite limited

resources and organization, Laíno garnered 20 percent of the vote in the 1989 presidential election, runner-up to Colorado candidate Andrés Rodríguez.

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

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

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

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

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

4. Other Independent Movements

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

B. Military

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

years, he developed close relationships with military officers who were, and still are, key industry leaders in the country.

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

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

The military remains involved in the Paraguayan economy and promises to be a major obstacle to privatization efforts undertaken by the next government. Military officers manage key industries such as airlines and the telephone company and have long been suspected of trafficking contraband such as stolen vehicles and drugs.

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

C. Church

Before 1989, the Catholic Church played a crucial role in supporting and providing a safe haven to opponents of the dictatorship. As the democratic process has opened, these individuals have been able to create political parties, professional associations and civic organizations without fear of reprisal.

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

Although the Catholic Church remains the most influential church in the country, the Protestant movement has won many converts. Protestant churches have also been active in

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

D. *Press*

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

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

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

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

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

E. *Nongovernmental Organizations*

1. *Decidamos*

Decidamos is a consortium of 12 nongovernmental organizations founded in 1989 to provide civic education. Decidamos has conducted civic education programs on the voting

process, the role and functions of local government and the significance of the new constitution. Trainers conducted workshops for church organizations, neighborhood committees, student and women's groups as well as for private citizens.

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

2. SAKA

SAKA, a consortium of local nongovernmental organizations including the CED with which NDI has worked the past four years, conducted parallel vote counts in 11 municipalities for the 1991 municipal elections. President Rodríguez acknowledged the victory of independent candidate Filizzola in large part because of the timely release of SAKA's results. The JEC did not release official results until almost one month after elections.

With technical and financial assistance from NDI, SAKA will organize a quick count for the 1993 elections. It has quickly mobilized its structure from the 1991 count. The consortium will draw a random sample of 20 percent of the populace collecting data from 70 different polling sites.

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

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

F. *Organization of American States*

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

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

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

VI. ELECTORAL ENVIRONMENT

A. *Party Primaries*

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

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

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

The Colorado Party tribunal had originally scheduled elections for November 1992, but postponed them when the Diaz de Vivar faction alleged that 200,000 names on the party registry did not have official identification numbers. This faction demanded that these names be struck from the registry. The issue went to the Supreme Court where it was decided to exclude the names. Wasmosy opposed the decision, but eventually accepted it. Elections were then rescheduled for December 27, 1992.

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

poll that showed one third of the population with a "good or very good" opinion of the Stroessner regime.

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

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

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

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

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

A new count declared Wasmosy victorious by 4,000 votes. The tribunal certified the results and destroyed the ballots. Argaña did not challenge the new results, because if he had, the Colorado Party would have missed the deadline to register candidates. Paraguayan political analysts have noted that many Argaña supporters were hesitant to challenge the vote because they are fairly represented on the national and departmental lists. Argaña is calling for his supporters to vote for the Colorado Party lists, but not for Wasmosy.

Political leaders and analysts agree that Wasmosy won the nomination by questionable, if not outright fraudulent, means. This has caused great concern about the prospects for free

elections on May 9. The opposition argues that if the government was willing to engineer a victory for Wasmosy in the primaries, it will likely try the same in the general elections. Even members within Wasmosy's faction, including Colorado President Blas Riquelme, question Wasmosy's electability given the doubts about the nomination process. Political leaders worry about the legitimacy of a national election in which one of the candidates was chosen in an undemocratic (and perhaps unconstitutional) manner.

B. *The Campaign*

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

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

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

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

The change from populism to modernization has been costly for Wasmosy. His advocacy of free markets and less government prompted many party members to accuse him of being unsympathetic to the needs of the people and a closet liberal. Argaña tagged Wasmosy with the nickname "Mbatana," a Guaraní name for a breed of rooster characterized by its red feathers (Colorado Party colors) on top and blue feathers (PLRA colors) on the bottom.

Caballero Vargas garners most of his support from the professional middle class in Asunción. Young people without strong ties to the traditional political parties support him by a large margin over the other candidates. Polls show Caballero Vargas with about 35 percent followed by Wasmosy at 27 percent and Laíno at 24 percent. Other candidates have a combined 1 percent support, and about 13 percent of the electorate are undecided.

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

No presidential candidate would have a chance for victory if he or she could not deliver speeches in both official languages of Paraguay. Candidates travel throughout the country

addressing potential voters in a mixture of Spanish and Guaraní, emphasizing Guaraní the further they travel from Asunción. News articles often quote candidates in Guaraní and only occasionally provide a Spanish translation. Newspaper and television advertisements -- in Spanish -- fill the printed pages and the airwaves.

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

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

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

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

VII. CONCLUSIONS

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

The opposition's concerns derive from five factors:

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

- 2) *The Colorado Party, which has ruled since 1954, has undemocratic elements that will be particularly reluctant to cede power.* The Colorado Party leader's statement that he would organize a "special tricks commission" alarmed opposition supporters and have contributed to their suspicions about the ruling party's commitment to fair elections.
- 3) *Municipal elections held two years ago were an administrative disaster.* The elections were suspended in 29 municipalities due to various administrative problems. If the confusion and chaos that marked election day in many areas two years ago are repeated this year, the legitimacy of the elections will be questioned.
- 4) *Almost every political observer in Paraguay agrees that Carlos Wasmosy, the Colorado Party candidate, won his party's primary by fraud against Luis Argaña.* Ironically, the fraud was engineered by forces believed to represent the more democratic faction in the Colorado Party against Argaña, who represents the traditional Colorado factions that supported Stroessner. If supporters of Wasmosy, led by President Rodríguez, were willing to steal the primaries, the opposition asks, why won't they try to do the same in the general election?
- 5) *The military maintains close ties with the Colorado Party and fears investigation into corruption and an exertion of civilian control over the military.* Some observers believe the military would feel particularly threatened by Domingo Laíno, the Liberal Party candidate known internationally for his strident opposition to the Stroessner regime.

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

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

The parties recognize they will be able to prevent fraud on election day by stationing observers at every polling site and that vote counts by the parties and civic groups will preclude tampering with the results. With domestic and international observers monitoring the process and international observers monitoring the balloting and counting, the alleged fraud of the Colorado primary will be difficult to repeat in the general elections.

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

When pressed, the opposition acknowledges that the only potentially weak aspect of the process is the registration lists. The parties received the registration lists one month before the elections in order to verify their accuracy. Upon reviewing the lists, opposition parties claimed that many people had been transferred to new polling sites and that thousands of fake names appeared on the lists, but said that under no circumstances should the elections be suspended because of these irregularities.

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

APPENDIX I

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

SUNDAY, MARCH 28

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

MONDAY, MARCH 29

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

TUESDAY, March 30

8:30 Minister Hugo Estigarribia
Ministry of the Interior

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

12:00 Lunch

12:30 Leave for Paraguari and Carapegua

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

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

17:00 Candidates for governor in department of Paraguari

18:00 Celso Yegros, Bishop of Paraguari

19:00 Return to Asuncion

21:00 Dinner

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 31

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

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

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

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

16:00 Leave for airport