



**NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTE
FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS**

THE 1990 GUATEMALA ELECTIONS

A Pre-Election Report



NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTE FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

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The National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) conducts nonpartisan political development programs overseas. By working with political parties and other institutions, NDI seeks to promote, maintain and strengthen democratic institutions and pluralistic values in new and emerging democracies. NDI has conducted a series of democratic development programs in more than 30 countries including Argentina, Bulgaria, Chile, Czechoslovakia, Haiti, Hungary, Liberia, Namibia, Nicaragua, Northern Ireland, Pakistan, Panama, the Philippines, Poland, Romania and Uruguay.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This is the report of two delegations sponsored by the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) that visited Guatemala in August and September to observe the electoral process.

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Five years ago, civilian rule returned to Guatemala after more than 30 years of direct or indirect military rule. Vinicio Cerezo won a landslide victory, garnering two-thirds of the vote in a run-off. Observers praised the conduct of the elections and expressed hope that the Cerezo administration would utilize its mandate to institutionalize the nascent democracy by curtailing human rights abuses, strengthening the judicial system and expanding freedom to organize politically. For two years, significant progress was made. Freedom of speech flourished and political organizations were resurrected or founded.

But two coup attempts, in May 1988 and May 1989, led the government to retreat. During the second half of Cerezo's term, killings, politically and non-politically motivated, have increased significantly. Human rights groups charge that the military and police are responsible and they fault the government for not prosecuting the accused. Others, however, attribute the violence to the declining economy and the proliferation of private security forces.

The violence has had deleterious effects on the 1990 election campaign. A vigorous and nationwide campaign by the leading candidates and ubiquitous political advertising has been marred by killings of and threats against candidates and others involved in the electoral process. The campaign environment has not allowed for unfettered debate. Freedom of expression is liberally permitted under the law, but the violence constricts the political spectrum by discouraging participation in the political process and suppressing countervailing points of view.

The violence, both political and social, combined with the downturn in the economy, has led many Guatemalans to question the efficacy and desirability of democracy. According to one public opinion poll, respondents divided evenly between a preference for democracy and military rule. The beneficiary of this discontent has apparently been retired General Efraín Ríos Montt, who ruled the country for 16 months in 1982-83 and received the opprobrium of human rights groups. Ríos Montt had been permitted to temporarily register as a presidential candidate (despite a constitutional prohibition on his candidacy because of his participation in a coup) because the Supreme Court did not render a final decision on the legality of his candidacy before the September 12 deadline for registration of candidates.

Although Ríos Montt's appeal for registration as a presidential candidate was ultimately denied by the Court on October 12, he continues to campaign and to lead the most recent public opinion polls with more than 20 percent of the vote. Significantly, polls indicate that as many as 30 percent of voters are undecided. Some people fear that the abstention rate, which was 40 percent in 1985, will be significantly higher this year.

The November 11 elections for president (a second round will take place on January 6 if no candidate receive more than half the vote), members of Congress, the Central American Parliament and most of the country's municipal governments are expected to be administratively fair. The president of the Supreme Electoral Tribunal is highly regarded

by all the major political parties. Allegations of fraud against the Christian Democrats have been highly speculative and remain undocumented. Despite rumors of coup attempts, the first transition between civilian governments in more than 35 years is likely to occur on January 14, 1991.

As a sign of support for a democratic transition under pressure, the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI), with a grant from the U.S. Agency for International Development, will sponsor a 40-member international delegation to observe the first round of the election. NDI plans to organize a smaller delegation to observe the second round.

A three-member NDI team visited Guatemala from August 15-20 to assess the political situation in the country and to acquire information on the electoral process. A seven-member international team, led by former Arizona governor and Democratic presidential aspirant Bruce Babbitt, visited the country from September 20-24 to follow up on the findings of the advance delegation and to gather additional information. [See appendix A for delegation's terms of reference.] This report is the result of the findings of those two delegations.

The other members of the delegation in September were Nehemiah Dagan, retired brigadier general from Israel; Senator Francisco Guerra García from Peru; Congressman Juan Torres from Bolivia; Juan Manuel García Passalacqua, a political scientist and journalist from Puerto Rico; Mark Feierstein, NDI program officer and director of the Guatemala program; and Deborah Hauger, an NDI consultant based in Guatemala. The members of the August delegation were García Passalacqua, Feierstein and Hauger.

Both delegations met with the leading presidential candidates, the Electoral Tribunal, human rights activists, academics, journalists and members of civic education groups. [See appendix B for the schedule of the September delegation.] The delegations were in Guatemala during times of heightened uncertainty over the candidacy of Ríos Montt and increased concern over the rise in election-related violence. Both delegations were well-received, and many Guatemalans expressed gratitude for NDI's organizing delegations weeks before election day. Press coverage of the delegation in September was extensive. [See appendix C for articles in the Guatemalan press.]

NDI also organized a forum on comparative democratic experiences. Guatemalan participants noted that the forum brought together leading candidates, military officers and human rights activists for the first time. [For report on forum and list of participants, see appendix D.]

II. GEOGRAPHY, DEMOGRAPHY AND THE ECONOMY

Guatemala, situated between Mexico to the north and El Salvador and Honduras to the south, is the northernmost country on the Central American isthmus. Guatemala has

a population of about 10 million people on a land mass of 108,780 square kilometers (approximately the size of Tennessee). It is organized into 22 departments and 330 municipalities.

About 60 percent of the population is Mayan -- 22 languages are spoken among them -- while 40 percent of the population is of mixed Spanish and indigenous descent, (ladino). Most of the indigenous population lives in the highlands to the west, while most of the Spanish-speaking ladino population lives in the east. Although about 70 percent of the population is Roman Catholic, this is a low percentage by Latin American standards; the evangelical movement in Guatemala is one of the fastest growing in the world.

The country's land distribution is one of the most uneven in Latin America. Family farmers represent only about 5 percent of the population.¹ Most *campesinos* migrate during the planting or harvesting seasons to work on the large export farms on the coast.

Agriculture is the mainstay of the economy, accounting for about 30 percent of the country's economic production and providing a living to over two-thirds of all Guatemalans, including the vast majority of the poorest ones. The largest agricultural exports are, in order of importance, coffee, cotton and sugar. In the 1960s and 1970s, Guatemala developed a robust industrial sector, which comprises over 15 percent of the Gross National Product.

III. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A. Pre-Colonial Era

Before the arrival of the Spaniards in 1523, nearly the entire Central American isthmus and present-day Chiapas of Mexico were inhabited by the Mayans. The seat of the Mayan civilization, Tikal, was located in the rain forests of northern Guatemala. People throughout Mayan society journeyed to this city to study in its schools, worship in its temples, or, like today, marvel at the superior architecture of its buildings and temples. The Mayans made revolutionary advances in architecture, mathematics, and astronomy. Mayan society was extremely theocratic, empowering priests with the spiritual and secular mandates of its populace. Sacrifice was often used as an expression of worship. Even today a peculiar mixture of Catholicism and Mayan worship is reflected in the sacrifice of small animals in reverence to saints of the Catholic Church.

B. Colonial Period

After Hernán Cortéz conquered the Aztecs in Mexico, he sent his first lieutenant, Pedro Alvarado, south to search for gold and other riches. According to legend, Alvarado

¹ James Painter, *Guatemala: False Hope, False Freedom* (London: Catholic Institute for International Relations, 1989), p. 12.

encountered fierce resistance from the Mayan warriors led by Tecun Uman, today the national hero of Guatemala. Tecun Uman, thinking that horse and man were one, killed Alvarado's mount and stood to revel in his victory at which time Alvarado pierced Uman's heart with his sword. As Tecun Uman lay dying, a green bird with large tail feathers -- a Quetzal -- landed on his wounded chest and stained its feathers with the blood of the Mayan warrior. Today, the green Quetzal with its red chest is Guatemala's national symbol.

Pedro Alvarado ruled Central America from the town of Ciudad Vieja and later moved the capital to neighboring Antigua, where it remained until a series of earthquakes prompted moving the capital to Guatemala City in the late 1700s.

When Alvarado's hopes of finding gold and silver were dashed, the Spanish began to exploit the land and its indigenous population for economic gain. The mercantilist system -- the exploitation of raw materials and agricultural products by the mother country -- hindered those who were not part of the small aristocratic class from upward mobility. Huge plantations containing tobacco and cotton replaced the small subsistence farms of the Indians and put in place the economic system that solidified the hierarchy of Guatemalan society and laid the groundwork for the land distribution that still exists today. A vagrancy law required "unemployed" Indians to work 40 days a year on public works projects. Peonage-for-debt, a system in which Indians worked for minuscule wages to repay debts, insured an abundance of cheap labor.

C. Independence

The Central American countries began independence from Spain in 1821 as a federation. This relationship lasted 17 years before fighting between Conservatives and Liberals led to the breakup of the federation and the establishment of five autonomous Central American countries. Guatemala's first leader was an illiterate mestizo leader of extraordinary political acumen, José Rafael Carrera. Fanatically religious, Carrera believed he was divinely chosen to rule Guatemala. He remained president-for-life until his death in 1865, setting the precedent of strong-man rule that would remain until the latter part of the 20th century.

Long-term reigns of strongmen in the 19th and 20th centuries provided a form of political stability that allowed for economic development and an increase in social programs. During this time the government constructed roads, telegraphs and a railroad that helped contribute to the economic growth of the nation. Health care and education also improved as hospitals and schools were built in the countryside. Barrios created the Ministry of Education and gave all children, regardless of sex or race, the right to an education.

Political opposition, however, was brutally repressed, and the small aristocratic class held tightly to their power. The wealth created through economic development was

unevenly distributed, widening the gap between the rich and the poor. Many far-reaching proposals in health and education went unfulfilled due to lack of public funds, while the Guatemalan tax rate remained the lowest in the region. This combination of economic inequality and political despotism came to a climax during the repressive regime of Jorge Ubico, helping to trigger the Revolution of 1944.

D. Revolution of 1944 and the 1954 Coup

On October 22, 1944, Major Francisco Arana and Captain Jacobo Arbenz led a coup that ousted Ubico's hand-picked successor. Soon thereafter, Juan José Arévalo Bermejo, an exiled school teacher, was elected with 85 percent of the vote in the first free election in Guatemala in more than 50 years. Inspired by the social programs of President Franklin Roosevelt in the United States, Arévalo embarked on a program of economic redistribution and social justice. He quickly established a social security system and founded an economic development institute to aid the poor. Government spending was reallocated, and more than a third of the budget was devoted to education and health programs. A new constitution abolished the vagrancy law and assured civil rights for all citizens regardless of race.

Jacobo Arbenz, the minister of defense under Arévalo, won the subsequent elections in 1950 with 63 percent of the vote and implemented sweeping reforms directed at the large multinational corporations. These reforms included the breaking up of monopolies, the collection of back taxes and a more equitable distribution of land. Arbenz's most far-reaching objective was land reform. Redistribution included the expropriation of uncultivated land with compensation at the value declared for tax purposes. Since this value was much lower than the actual market value, large landowners, particularly the United Fruit Company, objected vehemently.

Destiny placed Arbenz and his innovative economic reforms in the midst of the hottest period of the cold war, and his program was viewed as a communist threat. Other circumstantial evidence strengthened the suspicion that Arbenz was part of a larger international conspiracy: communist sympathizers in the government and the discovery of a secret arms shipment from Czechoslovakia to combat a stringent U.S. arms embargo. As a consequence, United Fruit and other big businesses persuaded the Eisenhower Administration to aid Carlos Castillo Armas, an exiled colonel with allegiance to the right, in ousting Arbenz. Castillo Armas and his small army met minimal resistance and soon controlled the presidential palace.

E. Militarization, 1954-1982

Guatemalan politics during the next 25 years was dominated by a series of military dictatorships and a revival of the pre-1944 repression. The constitution written during the Arévalo administration was annulled and many of the newly obtained civil rights rescinded. Land reform was reversed. In 1958 Mario Sandoval Alarcón founded the

National Liberation Movement (MLN), a right-wing political party with significant influence and durability. The more zealous members of the MLN established the "Mano Blanca" (White Hand), a precursor to the right-wing death squads that exist in Latin America today.

In 1960 when General Miguel Ydígoras allowed the CIA to train Cuban exiles in Guatemala for the ill-fated Bay of Pigs operation, a group of young officers felt that Guatemalan sovereignty was being infringed upon and revolted. The revolt failed and the officers fled to the mountains of the east to form the nucleus of the modern-day guerrilla insurgency, with support from Fidel Castro. Although this movement was brutally repressed (the east is now a bastion of conservatism), its few survivors continued the cause, recruiting among the indigenous population to the west where the guerrillas expanded and their successes grew.

The only civilian president from 1954 to 1985 was Julio César Méndez Montenegro. He won the election in 1966, but was only permitted to take office because he agreed not to interfere in the army's internal affairs or its counterinsurgency activities. Human rights during his term deteriorated; the first death squads in Latin America were formed in Guatemala during the Méndez Montenegro administration.

In 1982 the three primary armies of the insurgency formed the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity (URNG). Its goal, as it stated in its communique announcing its formation, was "the end of the economic and political domination of the repressive wealthy, both national and foreign, who rule Guatemala."

By 1982, the guerrillas, espousing a rigid revolutionary ideology and utilizing ruthless methods, were militarily active in over half the country. During the regime of Romeo Lucas García, violence, so prevalent in Guatemalan society, took an even more perverse turn. Every morning, decapitated and tortured bodies were discovered in the streets of the capital and the countryside; official estimates place the number of victims at around 40,000, while others believe there were more than 100,000. Torture and assassination touched the lives of ladinos as well as indigenous, the urban as well as the rural. The relatively strong Guatemalan economy plunged, and corruption within the government raged unchecked.

F. Ríos Montt and Mejía Victores

The emergence of the charismatic evangelical General Efraín Ríos Montt, who became president in 1982 after a coup that overthrew Lucas García, was welcomed by many Guatemalans. Ríos Montt represented a progressive group of young middle ranking officers who sought to de-politicize the army and return the nation to civilian rule.

Ríos Montt put an abrupt end to the right-wing death-squad activities, and daily life in the cities returned to relative normality. International opinion, which had placed the

human rights record of Guatemala with that of South Africa and Idi Amin's Uganda, gradually changed as conditions improved in the cities. The sinking Guatemalan economy was buoyed by the reinstated aid from the industrialized countries. Ríos Montt dealt with corruption harshly and preached the importance of honesty, sobriety, and marital fidelity in his weekly sermons.

The primary reason that the young military coup leaders chose Ríos Montt to lead the provisional government was to defeat the guerrillas, who occupied territory just a few miles outside the capital. Toward that end, Ríos Montt initiated a "beans and bullets" counterinsurgency that sought to win the hearts and minds of the civilian population by providing food and shelter to those not yet under guerrilla occupation and arming civilian patrols to combat the insurgency. Often, however, this meant uprooting the indigenous from land that had been their home for generations and placing them in highly regulated model villages. The inhabitants were not allowed to leave these villages without special permission and were forbidden to move back to their previous homes. Men were obligated to serve in civilian patrols 24 hours a week. Those who refused to participate were labeled subversive and dealt with accordingly.

Villages in guerrilla strongholds met a much worse fate. Entire villages were destroyed, and men, women, and children were killed. Life in the western highlands during the 18 months of Ríos Montt did not change measurably from the years of Lucas García. In a year and a half, the guerrilla armies were decimated; the few survivors, cut off from their primary base of support, were left to roam the mountains relegating military strategy to hit-and-run attacks and random acts of sabotage.

Having come to power promising free and fair elections, Ríos Montt later decided that the future of the nation depended on the strong-arm rule of law and declared himself president-for-life. The predominately Catholic nation was skeptical, and this proclamation led to another coup in 1983.

General Oscar Mejía Victores, Ríos Montt's successor, confronted a declining economy, an impatient society and the country's highly negative international image. Consequently, he had little choice but to follow through with the 1982 promise of a new constitution and free and fair elections.

G. Constitution of 1985

Constituent assembly elections were held on July 1, 1984. More than 1,110 candidates competed for the 88 seats in the assembly, which would write the new Constitution. Many Guatemalans expected fraud, but were surprised by the professionalism of the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE) and the credibility of the results. Moderate parties fared best, led by the Christian Democrats, which won 20 seats, and the newly formed National Centrist Union (UCN), which garnered 21 seats. A coalition of three right-wing parties won 23 seats, although it received fewer votes than the UCN and DC.

The Constitution of 1985 was most noteworthy in its inclusion of human rights. The document established that international law takes precedence over Guatemalan law and created a human rights commission and a human rights ombudsman to streamline investigations and give a sense of permanence to their mission. Other reforms included an increase in congressional powers and the establishment of a permanent Court of Constitutionality with independent jurisdiction.

H. 1985 Elections

Vinicio Cerezo, a Christian Democrat who had spent several years in exile, won the 1985 presidential election, garnering two-thirds of the vote in the second round against Jorge Carpio of the UCN. Eight political parties or coalitions, ranging from center-left to far right, participated in the elections.

The elections were considered procedurally fair and marked a first step toward the transition to democracy. Although such issues as human rights and land reform were avoided early in the campaign, by the last week, almost no subject was taboo. The elections, nevertheless, were marred by violence and fear. Human rights violations, including murder and kidnapping, continued.

I. Civilian Rule Under Cerezo

Cerezo, as only the second freely elected civilian president in Guatemala in 30 years, tried to dampen expectations upon taking office by explaining the limitations of newly established civilian rule. He said his primary goal was to remain in office until 1990 and peacefully transfer the presidency to another freely elected civilian.

The first half of Cerezo's five-year term was notable for its successes. Inflation slowed, politically motivated violence declined, freedom of speech flourished and new political groups were founded.

In the second half of Cerezo's term, crime and political violence increased. The economy slowly sank into recession. The business federation, CACIF, led a one-day work shutdown of the economy in 1987 to protest higher taxes and government corruption. In 1988, public servants went on strike demanding higher wages.

Two coup attempts in March 1988 and March 1989 were defeated by military officers loyal to Cerezo, but the president was forced to make important concessions to the army, such as ceding control of the police to the military and suspending government talks with the guerrillas. Human rights groups charge that the military and police have been murdering political dissidents, with total impunity; no military officer has been punished for human rights abuse. The only case in which members of the police force had been tried for human rights abuses was overturned in August 1990. Four police officers from Guatemala's second largest city, Quetzaltenango, had been found guilty of the murder of

two university students and had each been sentenced to 30 years in jail. The officers have now been released from prison pending appeal.

IV. ELECTORAL ENVIRONMENT

On November 11, 1990, Guatemalans will elect a president and vice president, members of congress and the Central American Parliament and local officials in 300 of the country's 330 municipalities. If no presidential candidate obtains an absolute majority in the first round of voting, a run-off election between the two candidates with the highest number of votes will be held on January 6, 1991. The president is elected for a five-year term and cannot be re-elected.

Twenty-nine members of the 116-member congress will be elected from a national list and 87 by district. The largest district is Guatemala City, which elects 10 congressmen.

The elections will be governed by an election law considered by the political parties to be comprehensive and unambiguous. The current election law was originally drafted in 1987 and was revised as recently as this year. Given the experience of the 1985 national elections and the 1988 municipal elections, this year's elections are expected to be well-administered. But concerns remain regarding the violence that has become associated with the election campaign.

Since the return to civilian rule, political space has increased, providing wider opportunities for political participation by many groups that had not formerly been permitted to participate in the political process since at least 1970. In the last five years, several labor, cooperative, student and peasant groups, which were active before 1970, have reemerged. New groups have also formed. Legal mechanisms have been put into place to permit broad registration of political parties and candidates. Although popular organizing has dramatically increased, groups traditionally repressed still suffer reprisals that limit further organizing.

While the current administration has made significant advances toward reestablishing civilian rule in Guatemala, continuing politically motivated violence seriously hinders the establishment of a pluralistic democracy, particularly in the interior of the country. Democracy in Guatemala has not yet been institutionalized to a degree that guarantees a safe arena for all potential participants in the political process.

The political spectrum is still tilted significantly toward the right, and human rights activists say that political activism on behalf of what are perceived as leftist causes, such as land reform, tax reform and human rights, is risky. There is no indication that any of the leading candidates would be able to advance on these fronts, even if they so desired. The continued power of the military continues to limit and jeopardize legitimate political participation.

The Guatemalan indigenous community, which comprises more than half the population, is largely marginalized from the political process. Almost all leading political positions are occupied by ladinos. In Congress, for example, only nine of the 100 members are Indian. No ministers are indigenous. There are no Mayan parties, and most candidates, even in districts overwhelmingly Indian, are ladinos.

Language differences hinder indigenous participation as well as cooperation and organization among different indigenous groups. There are 22 Mayan languages, and many Indians do not speak Spanish. Differences among indigenous communities make it difficult to generalize about the role of the indigenous in the political process. In particular, the extent to which some communities have been (or desire to be) integrated into the political process varies. In some cases, Mayans have selected not to participate in what is perceived a ladino process, preferring instead to maintain their own forms of local governance.

Indigenous issues are raised and addressed by candidates only in superficial terms. Human rights workers and advocates of indigenous rights say that even academic involvement in indigenous issues is dangerous. On September 12, 1990, a well-known anthropologist, Myrna Mack, who had been doing research on Guatemalan refugees for the research institute, AVANCSO, was murdered as she left her office in Guatemala City.

A. Discrediting of Democracy

When Vinicio Cerezo assumed the presidency in 1986 as the first elected civilian in 16 years, Guatemalans had high expectations for significant and rapid change. Few would disagree that a broadening of political space has occurred under Cerezo, particularly in the first two years of his administration. Supporters of the government maintain that Cerezo deserves credit for having successfully maintained civilian democratic rule for five years and for being just months away from ceding power to another civilian, perhaps from another party. The Christian Democrats note that the transition to democracy is a slow and difficult process but that Guatemala continues to make progress, albeit not as rapidly as many Guatemalans would prefer.

Critics maintain, however, that in the past two years, roughly since the first coup attempt in 1988, the government has backed off from challenging the power of the military and the most powerful economic sectors. Assassinations and disappearances of politicians, academics, labor leaders, human rights workers and peasant organizers increased sharply, and prosecutions of political-related crimes nearly came to an end. Government opponents say that such campaign promises as tax and land reform and efforts to hold the army accountable for human rights abuses have been practically abandoned.

The Cerezo administration and the Christian Democrats have also been accused of large-scale corruption. Party members, government officials and Cerezo were accused of using state funds for such personal purchases as expensive homes and boats. Accusations

of misuse of government funds extend heavily into the 1990 campaign. The government has been accused of using official funds, personnel, and equipment to aid Christian Democratic candidates. This contrasts with the difficult economic situation that others are experiencing (inflation was 65 percent in the first nine months of 1990) and an increased crime rate.

The perceived shortcomings and failures of the Cerezo administration have led many to become disillusioned with democracy, a concept that some people are said to equate with the Christian Democrats. In a country that has not experienced democratic rule for more than three decades and where more than 60 percent of eligible voters are under the age of 30, the Cerezo administration is the first experience of democratic rule for most voters. For first-time, particularly urban, voters, who hear about the "stable," relatively crime-free administration of Ríos Montt, civilian rule, as they know it, does not hold particular appeal.

The result of this disillusion has been twofold. Potential voters are apathetic and/or are seeking a charismatic law and order leader to stem corruption and crime. In a recent public opinion poll, respondents were divided between a preference for a military or democratic government. Only 51 percent of respondents expressed an intention to vote, compared with 69 percent a year ago. Abstention in the 1990 elections is expected to be higher than in 1985. This may also be due in part to the lack of profound debate over issues and the difficulty of distinguishing between the leading candidates. As Alvaro Arzú, the presidential candidate of the Party of National Advancement (PAN), said, "There's no real difference between any of us."²

Ríos Montt's insistence that he is still a candidate despite the ruling against him may also contribute to voter confusion. He led in the first poll taken after the Supreme Court's decision to disqualify his candidacy.

B. Violence and Intimidation

The electoral environment has been marred by threats against the lives of several presidential and vice presidential candidates. Although public figures all over the world receive death threats, they are taken much more seriously in a setting such as Guatemala, where political assassinations have occurred with alarming frequency.

Five presidential candidates and one vice presidential candidate have received death threats. The Electoral Tribunal has also received threats. On September 28, two weeks after the Supreme Court granted Ríos Montt his temporary right to register as a candidate, Félix Castillo Milla, director of the Citizens Registry, received a death threat by phone. Castillo Milla said the caller stated that if Ríos Montt were not permitted to register within

² Lindsey Gruson, "In Guatemala, a Taste for Strongmen Lingers," *The New York Times*, October 11, 1990.

three days, he would be assassinated. The three days passed without incident, but Castillo Milla continues to receive threats.

On October 3, the Electoral Tribunal received a bomb threat, and, on October 8, someone called and threatened to blow up the presses used to print the ballots. These threats against the tribunal marked a significant turn from pre-election intimidation against candidates and party members to nonpartisan participants in the electoral process.

Increases in political violence reflect a human rights situation that has been steadily deteriorating over the last two and a half years. In September the United Nations sent a human rights expert to Guatemala who stated upon arrival that he had come to investigate because of the poor human rights situation.

Ramiro de León Carpio, the government's ombudsman for human rights, recently denounced the marked increase in human rights violations during the last two years. As election day approaches, daily newspaper articles chronicle rising levels of political violence. The following reports reflect the dangerous political environment.

- * July 1 -- Labor leader Petronil Hernández Vasilo, secretary of a union affiliated with the Guatemalan Confederation of Labor Unity (CUSG), was assassinated.
- * On August 29 -- UCN Mayor Celso Milagro Giron y Giron was assassinated.
- * September 7 -- Solidarity Action Movement (MAS) vice presidential candidate Gustavo Espina's business was attacked by gunmen who fired bullets into the windows of his office and adjoining buildings. A few hours later, in the middle of the night, unidentified persons called the candidate's home saying that the armed attack was only a "demonstration" of what could happen, and advising him to quit the electoral campaign immediately. Minister of the Interior Carlos Morales Villator said the attack on Espina was not politically motivated.³
- * In the first two weeks of September, the homes and businesses of several political candidates and participants in the political process, including UCN Congressman Juan Carlos Simons, were shot at.
- * September 16 -- Sebastian Morales, Christian Democratic regional director for San Pedro Jocopilas, was assassinated.
- * October 5 -- A mayoral candidate of the National Liberation Movement (MLN) in Mixco, Francisco Arnoldo Pensamiento, and his assistant survived an armed attack in Guatemala City. Party President Mario Sandoval Alarcón said he would not be

³ "Ministro de Gobernación Cierra los Ojos," *Prensa Libre*, Sept. 17, 1990.

surprised if a presidential candidate is murdered in the near future. The MLN also denounced the September 27 disappearance of Marcos Osorio Chivalan, the party's secretary in Santa Maria Chiquimula.

- * October 5 -- Juan José Rodil Peralta, congressional candidate for the Union of the National Center and former minister of the interior under Cerezo, and Oliverio Garcia Rodas, a UCN congressman, said they were attacked by machine gun fire as they rode through Guatemala City in Rodil's armored car. No one was hurt. The next day Rodil denied accusations by some Guatemalan congressmen and other political parties that the incident was a fabricated publicity stunt. A few hours later, Rodil's car was again machine-gunned as he traveled from Esquintla to the capitol. Again no one was hurt.
- * Alfonso Cabrera, the Christian Democrats' presidential candidate, claims to have survived four attempts on his life.⁴

C. The Candidacy of Ríos Montt

The uncertain candidacy of former President Gen. Efraín Ríos Montt has arguably been the greatest destabilizing factor in the Guatemalan electoral process. Ríos Montt, who became president following the 1982 military coup and ruled for 18 months, is continuing his attempt to run for president as candidate for the Plataforma No-venta. Ríos Montt's popularity (he leads most polls with between 20 and 30 percent of the vote) is considered to be due to the growing unrest and dissatisfaction with increasing levels of street crime, political violence, and alleged government corruption in the face of a severe economic downturn -- factors that contribute to the support of a candidate perceived to be iron-fisted, honest and uncompromising.

Ríos Montt's tenure as president is most remembered internationally for his creation of Guatemala's armed civilian patrols, his "scorched earth" policies in combatting left-wing insurgents and for extrajudicial executions of criminals ordered after the accused were secretly tried in a Court of Special Jurisdiction. Ríos Montt's special courts have long been criticized by Guatemalan and international jurists. Trials were secret, the prosecutors and the judges were anonymous, and the quality or existence of defense for the accused was questionable. Judges were routinely the victims of assassination -- to the point that most refused to try cases in any controversy. In an interview with the NDI delegation, Ríos Montt defended the trials, arguing that they were secret in order to protect the judges. Many Guatemalans recall Ríos Montt's 16-month tenure as president as a time when crime and corruption were under control. They recall a time of stability, a condition currently perceived to be lacking in Guatemala.

⁴ Alberto Flores, "Soy Sobreviviente de Cuatro Atentados," *Siglo XXI*, September 23, 1990.

For many months, most legal experts and politicians believed that the courts would not permit Ríos Montt to register as a candidate and have his name on the ballot because Article 186 of the Guatemalan constitution prohibits any individual who became president as the result of a coup d'etat from becoming president again.

Ríos Montt's lawyers, anticipating he would not be allowed to be a candidate, developed several intricate legal arguments based on the Guatemalan Constitution and international human rights covenants. The Guatemalan Constitution, they argue, states that the laws prohibiting Ríos Montt's candidacy are not retroactive, that the judicial value of the present Constitution begins as of January 14, 1986 (this is two years after he was ousted from power by the military), that provisions of international human rights accords prevail over provisions of the Guatemalan Constitution and that every citizen deserves the same rights and opportunities.

In early September, after his initial appeals to the Citizens Registry, the Constitutional Court, the Supreme Court and the Supreme Electoral Tribunal were rejected and his official registration as a candidate was twice denied by the Supreme Electoral Tribunal, Ríos Montt appealed to the Supreme Court for political amnesty. According to the Guatemalan amnesty law, the suspension of citizen's rights ends when amnesty is granted. Although Ríos Montt was granted this particular amnesty, he did not necessarily qualify for the presidency, according to the Supreme Court. Ríos Montt's lawyers argued that the amnesty absolved him of all past acts enabling him to exercise his full rights of participation in the presidential race.

As Ríos Montt's lawyers continued to advance an assortment of legal strategies to keep alive his potential candidacy, the September 12 deadline for formal registration of candidates arrived. In a move that shocked many in the legal community and outraged the Citizen's Registry and the Supreme Electoral Tribunal, the Supreme Court, at midnight on September 12, granted Ríos Montt the right to register, pending a final decision by the courts on the constitutionality of his candidacy.

After several postponements of a final decision on the case, on October 12, the Supreme Court, with the support of the Supreme Electoral Tribunal, ruled that Ríos Montt was barred from participating in the presidential elections. Ríos Montt appealed to the Court of Constitutionality -- his final right of appeal -- but the court ruled against him.

Despite the rejection of his candidacy, Ríos Montt continues to campaign. His public response to the courts' decisions has been to reassert that he still considers himself a full-fledged candidate and will win the elections. In September, Ríos Montt told the NDI delegation that he would respect the courts' decisions, but that his supporters might not. "I respect the law, but I can't control the passion of the people," he said. The possibility of a military coup in support of Ríos Montt is discounted by most because he is not believed to have a strong base of support in the military.

V. MAJOR ACTORS IN THE POLITICAL PROCESS

A. Political Parties

Most political parties in Guatemala are relatively new, personalist electoral vehicles without extensive and permanent organizational structures. Unlike the pre-1985 laws, which required 50,000 signatures to establish and register a political party, forming a party now is relatively easy, requiring only 4,000 signatures. Party allegiance is so weak that a majority of the current members of congress now profess allegiance to a party other than that which they were a member of when they were elected five years ago.

Mass participation was first made possible in 1944, but the coup 10 years later and the three decades of direct and indirect military rule that followed curtailed opportunities for peaceful political activity. Parties on the left were decimated, and many leftist exiles still do not feel safe enough to return.

Twenty parties are participating in the 1990 elections. There are 12 presidential candidates. Not every party is participating in the municipal elections in all departments. In some departments, for example, as few as four parties are running candidates.

There are seven leading parties and six candidates, following the exclusion of Ríos Montt from the presidential ballot. Brief descriptions follow:

Christian Democratic Party of Guatemala (DCG)

Presidential Candidate: Alfonso Cabrera.

Vice Presidential Candidate: Marco Antonio Villamar

Alfonso Cabrera, a former foreign minister, is President Cerezo's hand-picked choice to succeed him. Cabrera's campaign has been damaged by dissatisfaction with the Cerezo administration and the candidate's alleged ties to drug traffickers. The Christian Democrats have been trying to recapture the left by choosing Marco Antonio Villamar, a leading figure in the 1944 revolution, as its vice presidential candidate. The party has also attracted leading defectors from the Democratic Socialist Party.

The Christian Democratic Party, a member of the Christian Democratic International, was founded in 1955. In the 1970s, the party formed alliances with more liberal parties and moderated its earlier conservative platform. The leading opposition party during military rule, its members suffered brutal repression, losing hundreds of candidates and leaders. In 1974, the party won the presidential elections with Ríos Montt as its standard bearer but was denied the presidency by the military. Today it is arguably the best organized party, particularly among the indigenous population.

National Advancement Party (PAN)

Presidential Candidate: Alvaro Arzú

Vice Presidential Candidate: Fraterno Vila

Alvaro Arzú was elected mayor of Guatemala City in 1985 and resigned in January to run for president. The PAN began as a committee to promote Arzú's mayoral candidacy in 1985 and became a party in mid-1989. The party is run by conservative professionals and friends of Arzú. Most of Arzú's support is in the capital. He runs behind Carpio in public opinion polls, though his support in most polls has been increasing over the last three to four weeks.

National Centrist Union (UCN)

Presidential Candidate: Jorge Carpio

Vice Presidential Candidate: Manuel Ayau Cordon

The UCN's presidential candidate, Jorge Carpio, is a publishing magnate who finished second to Vinicio Cerezo in the 1985 elections. The UCN, a member of the Liberal International, also finished second to the Christian Democrats in the 1984 Constituent Assembly elections and the 1988 municipal elections. Carpio owns *El Gráfico*, the second leading daily newspaper, which functions almost exclusively as a party organ. Public opinion polls place him in first-place, excluding Ríos Montt.

In 1985, the then two-year-old party had the best-financed campaign and used the most advanced U.S.-style mass media techniques. Carpio's selection of a member of the MLN [below] as his vice presidential candidate contributed to the impression of a rightward shift in the party. The party, however, still defines itself as centrist and seeks to attract the democratic left and the progressive right.

The party is strongly free-enterprise and receives strong financial backing from the business community.

National Liberation Movement (MLN)

Presidential Candidate: Col. Luís Ernesto Sosa Avila

Vice Presidential Candidate: David Eskanasy

The MLN was founded by Mario Sandoval Alarcón, patriarch of Guatemalan conservatives, and other supporters of the 1954 "liberation." The party is vehemently anti-communist and promotes conservative socio-economic values. In the late 1960s, it created the "White Hand" death squads. In 1984, Sandoval described himself as a fascist. In

1985, he garnered 11 percent of the vote, finished a distant fourth and claimed fraud, a charge he could not substantiate.

The party may have moderated since the last election. Sandoval participated in this year's talks between the parties and the guerrillas in Oslo and physically embraced a guerrilla leader.

Col. Sosa Avila is the brother-in-law of Ríos Montt.

National Opposition Front (FNO)

Presidential Candidate: René de León Schlotter

Vice Presidential Candidate: Aracely Ponce de Paiz

The FNO is an alliance of the Democratic Socialist Party (PSD), a member of the Socialist International, and the Popular Alliance 5 (AP-5), a splinter of the Christian Democrats. De León Schlotter, a founder of the Christian Democratic Party, left the party after losing the presidential primary to Cabrera.

Many of the PSD's leaders were killed in the 1970s, and some remain in exile. The party's presidential candidate in 1985, party president Mario Solórzano, garnered just 3 percent of the vote. The party is strongest in the capital. Of the leading parties, the PSD probably has the fewest funds. The party has become the first in Guatemalan history to run a woman on the presidential ticket.

The AP-5 was founded in 1984 by former Christian Democrats. In 1989, the party's leader received death threats and was forced to flee the country.

Plataforma No-Venta

Presidential Candidate: Efraín Ríos Montt

Vice Presidential Candidate: Harris Whitbeck

The Plataforma No-Venta is a coalition of three parties: the Democratic Institutional Party (PID), a military party, the National Unity Front (FUN) and the Guatemalan Republican Front (FRG), created this year by Protestant fundamentalist supporters of Ríos Montt. The disqualification of Ríos Montt's candidacy also disqualifies the entire slate of candidates of the Plataforma No-Venta.

Ríos Montt became president after a coup in 1982. But he was overthrown by the military 16 months later. The Supreme Electoral Tribunal and the Supreme Court have ruled that the Constitution bars him from running because of his participation in a coup.

In 1974, Ríos Montt was the Christian Democrat's presidential candidate, but his apparent victory was disallowed by the military, who sent him to Spain as the military attache.

Solidarity Action Movement (MAS)

Presidential Candidate: Jorge Serrano Elias
Vice Presidential Candidate: Gustavo Espina

Jorge Serrano founded MAS after the 1985 elections, in which he finished third as the candidate of the Democratic Party of National Cooperation. Serrano was the political party representative to the National Reconciliation Commission and participated in dialogue with the guerrillas. During the regime of Ríos Montt, Serrano was head of the Council of State, a legislative body hand-picked by Ríos Montt. The MAS is a member of the International Democrat Union, the international organization of conservative parties.

Serrano fared poorly in the early public opinion polls, but his support has increased in more recent polls, in part because of a strong performance in a televised debate with President Cerezo.

Six other parties are running presidential candidates. They are:

Democratic Party (PD)

Presidential Candidate: Jorge Reina Castillo
Vice Presidential Candidate: Carlos Torres

Claims affinity with U.S. Democratic Party.

Democratic Party of National Cooperation (PDCN)

Presidential Candidate: José Fernández
Vice Presidential Candidate: Adolfo Putzeys

Party describes itself as democratic left. Supports cooperatives.

Emerging Movement of Concordance (MEC)

Presidential Candidate: Benedicto Lucas García
Vice Presidential Candidate: Hector Guerra

Lucas García, a retired general and brother of former President Romeo Lucas García, participated in the 1954 overthrow of Arbenz. Organized the counterinsurgency effort against the guerrillas in 1983.

National Renovation Party (PRN)

Presidential Candidate: Fernando Leal

Vice Presidential Candidate: Kurt Muller

Founded by dissident members of the Revolutionary Party.

Revolutionary Party (PR)

Presidential Candidate: José Angel Lee Duarte

Vice Presidential Candidate: Carlos Gallardo

Julio César Méndez Montenegro, the only civilian president in Guatemala (1966-70) between the 1954 coup and the 1985 elections, was a member of the Revolutionary Party.

United Revolutionary Front (FUR)

Presidential Candidate: Leonel Hernández Cardona

Vice Presidential Candidate: Raúl Montenegro

A very small leftist party.

B. The Military and the Civil Defense Patrols

About 65,000 Guatemalans serve in the military. An estimated 95 percent of the soldiers are Mayans. Members of the armed forces cannot vote. The military is not expected to directly impede or interfere in the electoral process, in part because no candidate with a good chance of winning is perceived to threaten its authority. The military leadership, however, is said to be most wary of a strong Ríos Montt candidacy, who as president disrupted the military hierarchy.

Since the return to civilian rule, the military has, in theory, abandoned the doctrine of national security, which maintained that the primary threat to national security was the result of internal subversion, and adopted what it calls the thesis of national stability. That thesis is based on the belief that in a polarized, less developed society, the attempt of one sector to impose itself on the rest of society is destabilizing. The safety and welfare of

society should be developed from the interaction of different sectors of society and not by the imposition of any one, according to the theory of national stability.

The military is not a monolithic force. Since the return of civilian rule, there have been two coup attempts staged by younger officers. The instigators of the first coup attempt denounced the government and the military high command for drug trafficking and corruption. The target of the second coup was then Defense Minister Hector Gramajo, who was perceived as too close to the Christian Democrats and cooperating with government and military corruption.

As a result of the coup attempts, Cerezo was forced to make important concessions to the military, such as ceding greater control over the police to the military, ending government negotiations with the guerrillas and renegeing on an economic agreement worked out with labor unions.

Although the human rights situation has improved since the return of civilian rule, abuses continue by the police and military and, according to human rights groups, have increased significantly over the past couple years. Human rights activists have been the leading targets, and trade union and political party activists have also been killed or disappeared. Guatemalan and international human rights groups believe the military and security forces are responsible, but to date no member of the military or the police has been punished for human rights abuse.

Guatemalan human rights groups and many academics and politicians believe that political freedom cannot be expanded until the military's impunity is ended and its mentality changed. They say the military has to accept political views challenging the status quo as legitimate and not associate dissident views with communism or subversion.

If the military were to influence the election, it would be through the civil defense patrols. About 800,000 people serve in civil defense patrols in the interior of the country. The civil patrols were first established in 1981 and made official shortly after the 1982 coup that brought Ríos Montt to power. At their height, in 1984, nearly 1 million men served in the patrols; as armed civilians under the control of the army, they were a crucial element in the army's counterinsurgency war. Except for some areas in the east and south of the country, most of Guatemala's rural communities at one time or another formed civil patrols. By 1985, the rigidity of the patrol system was disbanded or relaxed in many areas, but today an estimated 500,000 people still serve.⁵

The 1985 constitution abolished forced civil patrol duty, but the army compels participation through intimidation and violence, according to human rights groups. The government says the majority of civil patrol members voluntarily serve.

⁵ "Above the Law? Civil Patrols in Guatemala," *Central America Report*, May 18, 1990.

The civil patrols are coordinated by the army's Department of Civilian Affairs, which could theoretically try to pressure the patrols into voting for a particular candidate. The military, however, is probably too divided and the civil defense patrols too independent from central control for the military to organize a campaign in favor of a candidate. For example, even though the military leadership is believed to be wary of Ríos Montt, some mid-level officials are more sympathetic to his candidacy. At the same time, some mid-level military officers have a more flexible attitude on human rights concerns, according to Amílcar Méndez, the head of an indigenous human rights group, CERJ, in Quiché Department that opposes the civil patrols.

C. URNG Guerrillas and the Peace Process

Estimates of the number of armed rebels range from the Defense Ministry's 950 to the guerrillas' claims of 3,500 to 4,000. The rebels were subdued by an army campaign in the early 1980s, but resumed guerrilla activities last year with a series of attacks on bridges and electrical towers. The guerrillas do not represent a serious threat to the government.

The URNG (Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unit), the coalition of guerrilla groups, advocates the elimination of the civil defense patrols, subordination of the military and police to the civilian judiciary, land reform and adequate political representation of the country's ethnic groups.

The URNG has been meeting with leaders of various sectors of Guatemalan society in a series of talks convened by the country's National Reconciliation Commission. In a meeting in Spain in May, the political parties and the URNG recognized the need for judicial reform, agreed to include the URNG in a National Constituent Assembly in 1991 and promised to hold future meetings. The guerrillas agreed not to disrupt the elections.

Three months later, the URNG met in Canada with leading business leaders. Both sides expressed satisfaction with the meeting. The URNG accepted that "business sectors and foreign investment can play a positive, dynamic and responsible role." Following the meeting, the private sector announced its support for the formation of a legal communist party in Guatemala. In September, the URNG met with religious leaders in Ecuador, where they committed themselves to pursuing a peaceful and political solution to the armed conflict.

The military has said the URNG must lay down its weapons before negotiations take place with the government. The URNG says it will not disarm until there is progress on its demands.

D. The Media

The media in Guatemala consists of six television stations (one government, one evangelical and four private), four major newspapers, one major weekly news magazine and more than 200 radio stations broadcast in Spanish and a number of indigenous languages. Print media is considered to be the most objective and sophisticated source of information. But due to the high level of illiteracy in Guatemala (estimates range as high as 50 percent nationwide and 70 percent for the indigenous population), few people read newspaper or magazines. In the rural areas, where few people have televisions, radio is the primary source of information.

Guatemalans enjoy legal guarantees of press freedom. Although there is more coverage of such sensitive topics as the military, drug trafficking and human rights abuses than in the early 1980s, journalists say they routinely censor themselves in the face of violence and the threat of attacks. In 1989, journalists suffered a series of attacks. A bomb exploded at a privately owned television station, a shareholder of a weekly newspaper was assassinated, and a number of reporters received death threats. In 1988, *La Epoca*, a progressive weekly that became a forum for discussing controversial topics, closed after just four months when its offices were violently destroyed.⁶ The first reported attack against a journalist during the 1990 election campaign occurred on October 15, when Victor Humberto Gonzalez Gamara, the owner of two major radio stations and the general secretary of the leftist Democratic Revolutionary Union (URD), was assassinated while driving his car.

1. Print Media

Most newspapers and magazines maintain a conservative editorial line, which is reflected in its reporting. The exceptions would be the underground newspapers of limited circulation printed by students at the University of San Carlos.

The only newspapers circulated nationally are *Prensa Libre* and *El Gráfico*. *El Gráfico*, owned by UCN presidential candidate Jorge Carpio, is relentless in its criticism of Cerezo, his administration and the Christian Democrats, and practically serves as the UCN's official organ. *Prensa Libre* is almost, if not equally, as critical of the government, though it is less sensationalist than *El Gráfico* and its reporting is considered more objective. Coverage of political issues has been steadily increasing in the last few weeks in these papers, although there is no investigative reporting on issues such as political assassinations. Other newspapers, considered less influential but generally offering more solid journalism, are *La Hora* and *Siglo XXI*. Both newspapers have limited circulation outside Guatemala City.

⁶ "Press Conditions in Guatemala," Committee to Protect Journalists, February 11, 1990.

The most professional and objective source of information is the weekly news magazine *Crónica*. *Crónica* refuses to run political ads (a policy the magazine's managing editor says enhances its credibility but has left it financially strapped) and is comprehensive in its coverage of all parties and candidates. However, in part due to the magazine's refusal to run political ads, *Crónica's* price is prohibitive for much of the general population (one copy costs roughly the equivalent of a day's wages for a skilled laborer). Circulation is limited primarily to Guatemala City.

Political polls have received prominent coverage in the press. Although most polls had shown Carpio and Ríos Montt in the lead, some have given the advantage to Serrano or Arzú. The political parties have accused each other of financing polls designed to skew the results in favor of their presidential candidate.

2. Television and Radio

By law, state television and radio are required to provide 30 minutes per week of air time to each registered party or coalition of parties. Some parties complain they have not been given the share of time and, more importantly, that the time afforded to the government for official programming is often used for partisan purposes by the Christian Democrats. An example is the use of the Christian Democratic party symbol following presidential talks.

Although foreign ownership of Guatemalan television and radio stations is legally prohibited, at least four of the six private television stations are effectively foreign-owned. Many political parties, particularly those with limited funds, have complained that free air time is given to the candidates, but in vastly differing amounts.

One party official said that Angel Gonzalez, a Mexican who owns two channels, feathers his relationships with potential future administrations by giving enormous amounts of free air time for campaign ads to a chosen few. He also gives some free time to all the other candidates. The candidates receiving minimal air time (e.g. one hour as opposed to 40 hours per week) need any time they can get and use it.

"This guy is smart," one politician said. "He plays everyone -- making each of us feel we are getting something. We're all participants because of the necessity to take advantage of every minute of time we have access to."

Although laws regulating the use of the media for political campaigns have been promulgated, they are unevenly enforced, if enforced at all. According to the Election Law, private press and media are prohibited from charging in excess of commercial rates for political advertising. Nevertheless, political parties and organizations say they are routinely charged double for political ads.

E. The Private Sector

Guatemala's economic elite is a diverse group, led by the traditional ladino elite, whose wealth was historically based on coffee, but which has moved in the last three decades into industry and new agroexports, and companies acting as junior partners to U.S. banks and transnational companies.

The economic interests of the groups making up the economic elite do not always overlap. While the traditional agroexporters have little interest in fostering domestic consumption and benefit from currency devaluations, the newer entrepreneurs who provide goods and services to the Guatemalan public seek to bolster the internal market and oppose currency devaluations.

Two organizations in Guatemala, CACIF, the Coordinating Committee of Agricultural, Industrial and Financial Associations, and Pyramide, an arm of CACIF, represent the most powerful elements of the private sector. CACIF is the main voice of the private sector.

The relationship between CACIF and the military, though close, has never been comfortable. Although united in their fight against "subversion" and the protection of private property, they diverge on other issues. Whereas CACIF advocates decreased government spending and an end to military corruption and privatization of various public companies (in which the military is said to have a stake) as a solution to the country's fiscal problems, the military has argued for increased taxation of the private sector.

Since its foundation in 1956, CACIF has been deeply mistrustful of reformist attitudes within the Christian Democratic Party, equating reform with socialism. At the beginning of his term, Cerezo embarked on a cautious land reform program, which met with resistance from the private sector and has resulted in little distribution of land.

In the 1990 election, the private sector has divided its support between Carpio, Arzú, Serrano and, before he was disqualified, Ríos Montt. Carpio has received the most support. Pyramide has acknowledged donating about \$1.5 million to his campaign. Heavy support has also gone to Arzú, who is a rapidly rising second favorite to Carpio among the economic elite.

F. Religious Organizations

1. Catholic Church

Due to its large number of followers, its considerable financial might and its historic role in Guatemalan politics, the Catholic Church plays an important unofficial role in the political process. Representatives of the Church met with the guerrillas in September in Ecuador as part of the peace process sponsored by the National Reconciliation Commis-

sion. The Church has also been at the forefront of the advocacy of human rights, establishing a human rights office in 1988.

Nevertheless, the Church has been careful to present itself as fully supportive of the democratic process and not of a particular party or candidate. Although the Church hierarchy occasionally presents its views on specific politically charged topics (such as land reform, the civil patrols and human rights) via widely publicized pastoral letters, and some of its clergy delve more directly into politics, the Church institutionally avoids directly linking its views to any political platforms.

2. Protestant Churches

Guatemala has one of the highest percentages of Protestants in Latin America. An estimated 20 to 30 percent of Guatemalans are Protestant, and Guatemala is expected to be the first country in Latin America with a Protestant majority.

The Protestant churches do not represent a unified political force. Their support is mostly in rural areas. Since transportation and communication in the rural areas is difficult, any movement based there tends to be politically marginalized. Moreover, there are more than 200 different, independent evangelical sects in the country. The only evangelical presidential candidate is Serrano, and there is no evidence yet that evangelicals will vote for him *en masse*.

VI. ELECTORAL FRAMEWORK

A. Electoral Tribunal

The Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE) is widely respected by virtually all participants in the political process as an impartial body of competent and committed professionals. The method of selecting the five magistrates on the tribunal enhances its standing as a non-partisan body. A nominating committee made up of representatives from universities and professional schools submits to the Supreme Court a list of 20 candidates chosen from a pool of practicing attorneys who meet the legal requirements for appointment to the tribunal. From these candidates, the Supreme Court, by a two-thirds majority vote of its members, selects five magistrates and five alternates to serve five-year terms.

Although the tribunal is dependent upon other branches of government for its financing, the selection method and the seemingly universal respect held for the tribunal president, Arturo Herbruger, and his colleagues has afforded the tribunal a degree of autonomy and independence otherwise unknown in Guatemalan politics. Since its formation seven years ago, the tribunal has strengthened and jealously guarded its autonomy. Although some parties claim that irregularities may affect the outcome of the election, they credit the tribunal for its ability to minimize any attempts at fraud.

There is a three-member board (*junta electoral departamental*, or JED), made up of a president, secretary and member (*vocal*) in each of the 22 departments, as well as a three-member board in each of the 330 municipalities (JME). The members of the department boards are chosen by the TSE; the department boards select the members of the municipal boards. The JMEs in turn select the three officials that staff the voting site (*juntas receptoras de votación*, or JRV.)

The municipal boards are responsible for selecting the voting sites, supplying the JRVs with the necessary materials and sending the election results to the Supreme Electoral Tribunal after receiving them from the JRVs.

B. Voter Registration

All Guatemalan citizens at least 18 years old who are not a member of the military are eligible to vote. Over 3.2 million people, approximately 70 percent of the electorate, are registered to vote in the 1990 elections, an increase of about 450,000 since 1985. Unlike in 1985, voting is not obligatory this year, although one cannot obtain a passport or drivers license if he is not registered to vote. Citizens register to vote by obtaining a document issued by the Citizens Registry or an annotation in their *cédula de vecindad*, the national identification card. The *cédula* is issued by the mayor of each municipality. Voter registration for the 1990 elections closed on August 11, 90 days before election day.

The electoral tribunal acknowledges that the electoral registries contain inaccuracies and that some people possess false national identification cards. The tribunal is seeking funding to overhaul the national citizens registry and replace the traditional paper *cédulas* with tamper-proof plastic cards for future elections. Despite imperfections in the registry, the tribunal does not believe the outcome of this year's elections will be affected.

Opposition political parties charge that Christian Democratic officials in small towns falsified *cédulas* to facilitate multiple voting for the ruling party. The tribunal acknowledges that some *cédulas* may be duplicated but is confident that multiple voting will be held to a minimum. [See below, "Alleged Violations of Electoral Law."]

C. Balloting Process

At each of the 5,630 voting precincts, or JRVs, three officials chosen by the municipal electoral board represent the electoral tribunal. Each party has the right to assign a pollwatcher to each of the JRVs. A maximum of 600 voters will be assigned to each JRV.

The balloting begins at 7 a.m. and ends at 6 p.m. Some polling sites in isolated areas will close between 4 and 5 p.m. because of a lack of electricity. Anyone in line when the balloting ends is permitted to vote.

When a voter goes to the polls on election day, he is given three ballots: a presidential ballot that also contains the national list of congressional candidates and candidates for the Central American Parliament, a ballot with the district congressional candidates and a municipal ballot. In selecting a presidential candidate, the voter simultaneously casts a vote for the party's national list of congressional candidates and deputies to the Parliament. The national list ballot contains the name, photograph, and party symbol of the presidential candidate.

The voting procedures in Guatemala are similar to the methods utilized elsewhere in the region. When a voter arrives at the JRV, he presents his registration card or *cédula* to the JRV officials, who will mark his name on the voter registry. He is then given three ballots and a black crayon. The voter marks his preference on the ballot while standing behind a curtain, folds the ballot and deposits it into a clear plastic bag. JRV officials then stamp the *cédula* or registration card, and the voter dips his finger in indelible ink.

D. Counting Process

When the voting is completed, the president of the JRV opens the bags that contain the ballots, unfolds them and counts them. The number of ballots is compared with the number of people that had voted, according to the electoral list of the JRV. The votes are counted one by one and read out loud by the JRV president. The other two members of the JRV review each ballot, as will the party pollwatchers. If everyone agrees on who received the vote cast on that ballot, the vote is recorded on the tally sheet (*acta*). If someone does not agree, a vote is taken among the JRV officials and pollwatchers. If that vote results in a tie, the ballot is nullified.

Once the counting is completed, the *vocal* of the JRV announces the results. If one of the pollwatchers does not agree, the president will do a recount until the results are accepted by a majority of the JRV officials and pollwatchers.

Each of the *actas* will contain the results, including the number of null and blank votes, as well as a list of challenges filed by the party pollwatchers. Each *acta* will be signed by the three members of the JRV and the pollwatchers; the pollwatchers will receive an official copy. The *actas* will be transported and the results telephoned to the municipal electoral boards, which, in turn, will send the results by fax to the Supreme Electoral Tribunal, which will be headquartered in the El Dorado Hotel in Guatemala City on election day. The seals and signatures of local election officials are verified by the Supreme Electoral Tribunal upon receipt in Guatemala City. The system of transmitting local vote tallies by fax was originally developed in Guatemala and has subsequently been adopted by other Central American countries to help ensure the accuracy and authenticity of transmitted local results.

Members of various political parties, particularly the UCN led by Carpio, have voiced concern that the government controls the national means of communication (namely the

telephone lines used for voice and fax transmission), which would facilitate government tampering with transmission of the results. These allegations have not been substantiated; the threat of disrupting communications on election day appears to be merely theoretical.

E. Alleged Violations of Electoral Law

Few people believe fraud is likely or even possible given the makeup of the electoral council, the electoral laws and the ability of parties to monitor the process. Nevertheless, some charges, as yet unsubstantiated, have been leveled at the government and the Christian Democratic Party. Opposition parties have alleged that the government is utilizing state resources and its control over the military to benefit Christian Democratic candidates.

Carpio has been most vigorous in denouncing alleged preparations of fraud by the government and the Christian Democratic Party. In a meeting with the delegation, he charged that the government is buying votes and that the recent changes in the military were designed to promote sympathizers of the government to influence the votes of many of the some 800,000 people that serve in the civil patrols.

To date, evidence has not been offered to support his charges. Carpio acknowledged to the delegation that he was merely speculating that the recent elevation of Colonel Robert Mata, considered to be a supporter of the Christian Democrats, to chief of staff was designed to tighten the government's control over the civil patrols.

Pressuring voters into casting ballots for a particular candidate and vote buying are difficult issues for foreign observers to evaluate. It is almost impossible to prove unless someone acknowledges having been pressured or having received money in exchange for a commitment to vote a certain way. Moreover, the effect of such pressures or financial incentives on the outcome of an election is even more difficult to gauge. Anyone who tells someone how to vote or offers money to a voter cannot be assured how that person will vote, as long as the vote is (or is believed to be) secret. One of Carpio's representatives said he believes that in Guatemala, particularly among the indigenous population, many people are not aware or do not believe that their vote is secret.

A number of the other opposition parties have also accused the government of utilizing state resources, such as vehicles, personnel and office equipment to support the campaigns of Christian Democratic candidates. Recent high-level personnel changes in the Cerezo administration, including the ministers of finance and economy and the president of the Central Bank, have led to speculation by some in the opposition that the Christian Democrats are attempting to use state funds to support their campaign.

Opposition parties expect the Christian Democratic Party to have an advantage on election day because of its access to government vehicles to transport voters. The government was said to have used even state boats to transport voters in the 1988

municipal elections. Since polling stations are often several hours from remote villages, the ability to transport supporters (or persuade undecided or disinterested passengers) is considered an advantage of possible significance. That has prompted some to suggest that the TSE should control government resources on election day to transport voters in a non-partisan fashion.

Alfonso Cabrera asserts that the Christian Democratic Party is cash-poor and that Carpio and Arzú have access to financial resources that give them an advantage over the Christian Democrats. Arzú is the only leading candidate that has not complained about any party's having an unfair financial advantage.

As noted above, some parties have complained that local Christian Democratic officials have falsified personal identification documents. Some Christian Democratic party members are said to have more than one *cédula*, and *cédulas* have allegedly been distributed to people not eligible to vote, such as those under 18, members of the military and foreigners. To vote, such people would also have had to have been registered by August 11. These allegations, though abundant, have not been substantiated. In any case, it would be difficult to falsify enough documents to affect the election without the operation's being detected.

Col. Luís Sosa Avila of the MLN claimed publicly that 100,000 Christian Democrats had obtained up to five *cédulas* to vote several times at different voting sites. The Electoral Tribunal responded that the increase in the number of registered voters between 1985 and 1990 was normal. Since the municipal election of 1988, the increase was just 329,561, less than the number of fraudulent *cédulas* alleged by Sosa Avila.

Some opposition parties have cited the possibility of chain voting. This scheme would allegedly work as follows: a voter would be given an envelope containing ballots for one of the parties before entering the polling site. He would then receive a new ballot at the JRV and would walk into the ballot booth where he would do nothing. He would deposit the pre-filled envelope in the ballot box and return the empty envelope to those coordinating the scheme in exchange for money. The Supreme Electoral Tribunal says that this scenario is unlikely to occur because it maintains strict control over the distribution of the ballots, which are printed on special water-marked paper donated by the U.S. government.

APPENDIX A

TO: MEMBERS OF SURVEY DELEGATION TO GUATEMALA
FROM: NDI
RE: TERMS OF REFERENCE
DATE: SEPTEMBER 7, 1990

We are very pleased you will be participating in our program in Guatemala. The objective of this delegation is to gather information on the electoral process to prepare a report on the pre-election day electoral environment and identify issues that the election delegations in November and January should focus on. A briefing report has been prepared for you that outlines some of the pertinent issues. Below is a list of questions that may help guide this delegation. We welcome any suggestions you may have.

I. THE POLITICAL CAMPAIGN

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

J. Are ethnic groups adequately represented in the electoral process as candidates, campaign workers or electoral officials?

II. ROLE OF THE PRESS AND MEDIA

A. Do the competing parties obtain adequate and relatively equal access to the press and media?

B. Does the government-controlled media provide adequate and balanced coverage of the political campaign?

C. Do journalists feel free to cover controversial topics? Are certain subjects considered taboo?

III. ADMINISTRATION OF ELECTIONS

A. Do the electoral tribunal and the local electoral officials act, and are they perceived to act, in a non-partisan manner?

B. Are there adequate safeguards to prevent widespread fraud in the balloting process? Are voters able to cast a secret ballot?

C. Is there evidence that prospective voters have been or will be arbitrarily removed from the electoral registry or be assigned to polling sites far from their homes? Are there measures to prevent multiple voting?

D. Have people been registered that are not eligible to vote, such as under-age Guatemalans and foreigners?

IV. RESULTS

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

V. The Elections Generally

A. Do citizens view the elections as a useful mechanism to express their political views?

B. How is the electoral process contributing to the strengthening of the democratic process in Guatemala?

APPENDIX B

SCHEDULE FOR NDI DELEGATION TO GUATEMALA

September 21-24

FRIDAY 9/21/90

- 7:45 a.m. Presidential candidate Rene de Leon Schlotter (AP-5), Aracely Conde de Paiz (PSD) and other representatives from each party
- 9:45 a.m. Visit to the Supreme Electoral Tribunal: Arturo Herbruger, tribunal president, and other tribunal members
- 11:45 a.m. TEAM 1: Meeting with MAS Presidential Candidate Jorge Serrano Elias and Vice Presidential Candidate Gustavo Espina
- 11:45 a.m. TEAM 2: Meeting with PAN Presidential Candidate Alvaro Arzu and Vice Presidential Candidate Fraterno Vila
- 1:30 p.m. UCN Presidential candidate Jorge Carpio and other UCN reps
- 3:30 p.m. Archbishop Rodolfo Quesada Toruño and other members of the National Reconciliation Commission
- 5 p.m. Presidential Candidate General Efraín Ríos Montt, Vice Presidential Candidate Harris Whitbeck and other representatives from the Plataforma No-Venta
- 7 p.m. Factor Mendez, director of the Center for the Study and Promotion of Human Rights
- 7:30 pm Representatives of National University and the Institute of International Relations for Peace (IRIPAZ)

SATURDAY 9/22/90

- 8:30 a.m. Representatives from the private sector: UNAGRO, FUNDESA
- 10:30 a.m. Attorney General for Human Rights Ramiro de Leon Carpio
- 12:30 p.m. Representatives of Guatemalan research organizations: ASIES, AVANCSO, CEDEP

Saturday 9/22 continued

- 2:30 p.m. Human Rights Groups: CONAVIGUA, CONDEG, CERJ,
- 5 p.m. Representatives of the Guatemalan Solidarity Union
- 7 p.m. Representatives of the media

SUNDAY 9/23/90

TEAM 1: District of Quiché

- 10:30 a.m. Arrival in Santa Cruz del Quiche. Meeting with local police officials
- 11 a.m. Amilcar Mendez, director of CERJ, and other Quiché residents
- 1 p.m. Army base 20: Col. Santizo Franco
- 2 p.m. Chichicastenango: local Christian Democratic officials
- 4 p.m. Solola: Father John Veacy

TEAM 2: Zacapa, Chiquimulas

- Morning Chiquimulas: Observer political rally
- 2:30 p.m. Military Base 8: Meeting with Major Cesar Orozco

EL GRAFICO

JURTESIA
CAMINO RE

DEMOCRATAS DE EUA EN AREA CONFLICTIVA

INFORMACION EN LA PAGINA 6.

Guatemala, lunes 24 de septiembre de 1,990

Año XXVIII - No. 9335.



● La delegación de observadores de Instituto Nacional Demócrata, adscrito a Partido Demócrata de los Estados Unidos que se encuentra en Guatemala para recabar información sobre el pensamiento de los indígenas y los campesinos, en torno a las próximas elecciones previstas para el 11 de noviembre, viajó ayer a la zona de conflicto, visitando directamente la ciudad de Santa Cruz del Quiché. Los miembros de la misión se entrevistaron con dirigentes de los Consejos de Comunidades Etnicas "Runujel Junam". El grupo está formado por Bruce Babbitt ex-gobernador del estado de Arizona, e congresista Juan Torres, de la Republic de Bolivia y Marck Feirstein, Oficial de Programas del citado instituto. INSERTA la foto del General Efraín Ríos Montt cuando ayer en compañía de los principales dirigentes de los partidos políticos que apoyan su plataforma política, se dirigía a varios miles de simpatizantes durante una concentración en la Plaza Mayor de la capital. (Graficó de Rony Véliz y Rolando Sanchinelli).



96 50CTVS. EN LA CAPITAL



RESTAURANTES



Te invitan



Demócratas en área conflictiva

□ Buscan información del comportamiento de habitantes frente a las elecciones generales.

SANTA CRUZ del Quiché, septiembre 24. Por Rony Iván Véliz, Enviado Especial de «El Gráfico». La delegación del Instituto Nacional Demócrata -IND- para Asuntos Internacionales, del Partido Demócrata de los Estados Unidos, se reunió ayer en horas de la mañana en esta localidad con los representantes indígenas de los Consejos de Comunidades Etnicas «Runujel Junam» (CERJ), para recolectar información sobre el comportamiento de la población ante las elecciones generales del próximo 11 de noviembre en nuestro país.

El ex-gobernador del Estado de Arizona Bruce Babby, dijo que el objetivo primordial de su viaje a Guatemala, es observar el trabajo efectuado por los candidatos presidenciales de los diferentes partidos políticos, que jugarán en esta contienda electoral, y qué piensan los sectores populares del proceso democratizador y el futuro de este país.

«No somos una comisión oficial; pero, daremos a conocer un informe especial a la Comisión de Observadores oficiales del Instituto, que será un grupo de 30 personas que viajará en noviembre, siguiendo de cerca el proceso electoral», indicó.

«Nos reunimos ya con el presidente del Tribunal Supremo Electoral, un sector de la prensa nacional, con los dirigentes del CACIF, con los dirigentes del «Grupo de Apoyo Mutuo», con los diferentes candidatos presidencia-

les y con funcionarios gubernamentales. Las pláticas fueron muy amistosas y de gran importancia para nuestra comisión».

Esta comisión de observadores estuvo en el reciente proceso de elecciones celebrado en Chile, Nicaragua, El Salvador, los países europeos orientales, África y ahora Guatemala, agregó.

Toda la información sobre el proceso electoral será para evaluar de qué manera puede ayudar apropiadamente el «IND» a Guatemala en sus esfuerzos de promover el proceso electoral libre y justo y a consolidar el gobierno democrático, manifestó el ex-gobernador Babby en



la sede de los Consejos de Comunidades Etnicas «Runujel Junam».

La Comisión que llegó a



□ EL EXCANDIDATO presidencial de los Estados Unidos Bruce Babby del Estado de Arizona, manifestaba a los indígenas de los Consejos de Comunidades Etnicas «Runujel Junam» que en su calidad de observador internacional el propósito de su visita al departamento de El Quiché y a este país, para la consolidación de un gobierno democrático.

□ Los observadores norteamericanos conformados por el ex-gobernador del Estado de Arizona Bruce Babby, el diputado Juan Torres de Bolivia, Marck Feierstein, oficial del programa para el Instituto Nacional Democrático y el general de brigada retirado, Nehemia Dagan de Israel, escuchaban los planteamientos del dirigente Amilcar Méndez del CERJ sobre el proceso electoral, del próximo 11 de noviembre. (Fotos de Rony Iván Véliz).

este lugar está formada por el general retirado Nehemia Dagan de Israel, su traductora oficial, Marck Feierstein, oficial de programas para la IND; y el ex-embajador del Estado de Arizona Bruce Babby.

□ **Experto de derechos humanos de la ONU viajó a Nebaj**

El experto de la Comisión de Derechos Humanos de la Organización de Naciones Unidas, profesor Christian Tomuschat, viajó ayer al municipio de Nebaj, de este departamento, para verificar las denuncias efectuadas so-

bre la detención ilegal de 86 personas en su mayoría mujeres indígenas de la aldea Amacchel, ejecutada por supuestos miembros de la institución armada a principios de la semana pasada.

Tomuschat se iba a constituir en el destacamento militar del lugar, para indagar con el comandante castrense sobre la detención ilegal, la cual violaría los derechos humanos de la población, informó un oficial de las Naciones Unidas al ser consultado. El experto de la ONU también se puso en contacto con los denunciantes.

Observación en marcha...

Demócratas visitan al Procurador...

* Conocer a fondo el proceso electoral

Un grupo de observadores electorales del Instituto Nacional Demócrata, afiliado al Partido Demócrata de Estados Unidos, visitó esta mañana al Procurador de los Derechos Humanos, Ramiro De León Carpio.

Su visita es parte de una serie de contactos con organismos guatemaltecos vinculados al proceso electoral, candidatos y partidos políticos.

Los visitantes están reuniendo elementos de juicio para integrar una delegación de observadores a las elecciones del 11 de noviembre en el país.

De León Carpio manifestó su satisfacción por la visita del grupo, reiterando el derecho constitucional de los guatemaltecos al voto, como derecho humano fundamental.

En ese sentido, su despacho está obligado a velar por la garantía constitucional de elegir y ser electo, que con-

cierte a todo guatemalteco.

Por consiguiente, su labor no puede desligarse del proceso electoral, como bastión importante de la consolidación de la democracia en el país, según manifestó.

De León Carpio conversó ampliamente con los miembros del grupo, encabezados por Bruce Babbitt, ex gobernador de Arizona y pre candidato presidencial del Partido Demócrata en

1988.

Según Babbitt, interesa al IND conocer y entender el proceso electoral guatemalteco, que constituye parte importante del proceso de democratización de América Latina.

En el caso concreto del Procurador de los Derechos Humanos, es importante conocer su vinculación con el proceso electoral, precisamente porque es derecho

inherente al hombre el de elegir y ser electo en el marco democrático, puntualizó Babbitt.

Además de contactar con organismos relacionados con el proceso electoral, el grupo se entrevistará con personeros de organizaciones del sector privado, entre ellas el CACIF y la Cámara de Industria, con la finalidad de conocer sus puntos de vista sobre las elecciones.



La visita al Procurador

APPENDIX D

NDI organized on September 24, 1990, a forum on comparative democratic experiences. The participants were the NDI international delegation and 40 Guatemalans, including leading presidential candidates, electoral officials, human rights activists and military officers.

The forum provided an opportunity for the foreign participants to relate experiences from their own countries' histories and for the NDI delegation to acquire additional information on the Guatemalan electoral process.

Guatemalan participants noted that it is was the first time military officers, senior political figures and human rights activists had participated in the same forum. Many said it was an important step in the promotion of dialogue among different sectors of Guatemalan society.

A list of participants follows.

List of Guatemalan Participants

"Experiencias en la Vida Democratica"

September 24, 1990

Jose Maria Argueta
Executive Director
DIG Foundation

Alfonso Cabrera
Presidential Candidate
Christian Democratic Party

Juan Callejas
Campaign Manager
Plataforma No-Venta

Mario Rolando Cabrera
Executive Secretary
Center for Political
Studies (CEDEP)

Arlena Cifuentes de Cabrera
Director
Center for Political
Studies (CEDEP)

Aracely Conde de Paiz
Vice Presidential Candidate
Democratic Socialist Party (PSD)

José Luis Cruz Salazar
ASIES

Carmen Escribano de Leon
AP-5

Aura Farfan
Mutual Support Group (GAM)

Jorge Antonio Fuentes Serrano
Solidarity Action Movement (MAS)

Fernando Gamalero
Bishop of Escuintla

Juan Gerardi Conedera
Auxiliary Bishop of the
Archdiocese of Guatemala

Alejandro Eduardo Giammattei
Director
Department of Coordination
Supremo Electoral Tribunal

Guillermo Gonzalez
CACIF

Arturo Herbruger
President
Supremo Electoral Tribunal

Rene de Leon Shlotter
Presidential Candidate
Democratic Socialist Party (PSD)

Captain Jorge A. Mazariegos Aguirre
Director
Center for Military Studies

Amilcar Mendez
Director
CERJ

Factor Mendez
Director
Center for the Study and
Promotion of Human Rights

Nineth Montenegro de Garcia
Mutual Support Group (GAM)

General Carlos Augusto
Morales Villatoro
Minister of the Interior

Byron Morales
UNSTRAGUA

Luis Alberto Padilla
Institute of International
Relations for Peace (IRIPAZ)

Mario Polanco
Mutual Support Group (GAM)

Rosa Pu
Committee for Peasant Unity (CUC)

Lt. Col. Carlos Radford
Center for Military Studies

Jose Recinos
Guatemalan Solidarity Movement

Claudio Riedel
Secretary for International
Relations
National Centrist Union (UCN)

General Jose Efrain Rios Montt
Presidential Candidate
Plataforma No-Venta

Asseneth Salazar
Congresswoman
Democratic Party

Nohemi Sandoval de Moran
Congresswoman
Democratic Party

Daniel Saxon
Human Rights Office
Archbishop of Guatemala
Arturo Serrano Bianchi
Solidarity Action Movement (MAS)

Jorge Serrano Elias
Presidential Candidate
Solidarity Action Movement (MAS)

Ernesto Situmul
PSD-AP5

Catalina Soberanis
Congresswoman
Christian Democratic Party

Mario Triay
Director
FUNDESA

Harris Whitbeck
Vice Presidential Candidate
Plataforma No-Venta