The Delegation:

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The Carter Center
Delegation To Observe
the July 6, 1997
Elections in Mexico
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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Carter Center staff have been observing the Mexican electoral process on an informal basis since 1986 and more formally by sending five election monitoring missions since 1992. These include the July 13, 1992 state elections in Michoacan and Chihuahua, two pre-election trips before the 1994 national elections, a trip to observe the Aug. 21, 1994 national elections, and the most recent study mission to observe the July 6, 1997 midterm elections. In addition, The Carter Center and Mexican civil society, political parties, and the Mexican Federal Elections Institute (I FE) have exchanged information on a regular basis. Representatives from several Mexican political parties and domestic monitoring groups visited Georgia to observe the 1992 U.S. presidential elections and attend a Carter Center seminar on the U.S. electoral process.

At the invitation of eight Mexican observer groups, The Carter Center undertook its first formal observation trip during the July 13, 1992 elections in Michoacan and Chihuahua. The 1992 five-member delegation comprised representatives of members of the Council of Freely Elected Heads of Government, a group of current and former heads of states from throughout the hemisphere based at The Carter Center which works on hemispheric issues such as reinforcing democracy. The delegation focused on assessing the work of the newly formed Mexican observer groups. In exchange, when representatives of the domestic observation groups and political parties participated in observing U.S. elections later that year, they delivered a statement on their observation and made recommendations on how to improve this country’s electoral process.

In advance of the 1994 Mexican national elections, The Carter Center fielded two pre-election delegations in September 1993 and June 1994. The first analyzed the electoral reforms passed in September 1993. These addressed concerns related to the voter registration list, voting process, IFE’s independence, campaign spending, access to the media, and the observers’ role. The September 1993 trip report concluded: “Although the electoral reforms [of September 1993] represent positive steps, as a whole, they fall short of establishing a foundation that would give all parties and the people of Mexico confidence that a genuinely free and fair election will occur in August 1994.”

The June 1994 mission sought to assess the major actors’ perceptions regarding electoral rules two months before the elections. This delegation’s report acknowledged further progress that had been made in implementing the September 1993 reforms and offered 10 recommendations to build confidence in the process before election day.

Since the decision to invite international observers was made so close to the Aug. 21, 1994 election, The Carter Center was not able to field its own delegation. Instead, The Carter Center, the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI), and the International Republican Institute (IRI) pooled their resources and collaborated on fielding an 80-member delegation to observe the 1994 presidential election. This joint delegation found that election day proceedings generally were peaceful, voter turn-out...
was high at 77 percent, and 88,000 Mexicans participated as domestic observers. Despite
the improvements, the delegation noted there still were issues of concern such as media
access, observer registration, campaign finance, and the autonomy of election authorities.

In November 1996, the Mexican legislature passed several electoral reforms
which addressed some of international and domestic observers’ concerns during the 1994
presidential elections. The 1996 reforms included:

- Changes in IFE’s structure so it functions as an autonomous entity, separate from
  the Ministry of Interior and made up of independent consejeros electorales
  (citizen counselors).
- Improvements to the process of refining the Federal Registry.
- Reforms in campaign spending which increased the percentage of government
  contributions and established a formula for distributing the funds among political
  parties.
- Establishing guidelines for political parties’ purchase of media time.

These reforms were acknowledged nationally and internationally as a step toward a more
democratic electoral process.

The Carter Center sent a study mission to Mexico during the July 6, 1997
electoral process for several reasons. First, considering the November 1996 reforms, we
felt it was important to assess the implementation of the reforms. Second, whereas in
1994 the invitations to observe the presidential elections were issued too late to organize
a full, high-level delegation, Mexican authorities seemed genuinely interested in
international observers’ presence. During his visit to The Carter Center in April 1997,
Mexican President Ernesto Zedillo mentioned the recent electoral reforms and commented: “To my deep satisfaction, we achieved our goal, an achievement many
believed impossible, but that now places the Mexican electoral system—as I hope
rather soon this is analyzed by The Carter Center—among the most advanced in the
world.” In addition to President Zedillo’s, The Carter Center also received invitations
from IFE and the major political parties.

The following report is divided into five parts. The Introduction offers
background on the meetings our delegation held while in Mexico. Section II discusses
the 1996 electoral reforms and their effects on the July 6 elections. Section III compares
the 1994 to the 1997 elections. Section IV discusses the challenges for Mexican
democracy as it approaches its next presidential election in 2000. Section V offers a brief
conclusion regarding the Mexican electoral process.

I would like to acknowledge several people for their participation. Foremost, I
want to thank Mary Anne Chalker, not only for her generous contribution which funded
the mission but also for her experience and expertise in Mexico. I also would like to
thank my co-chair of the delegation, Ambassador Harry Barnes, director of the Conflict
Resolution and Human Rights Programs at The Carter Center; Dr. Vikram Chand.
associate professor of government at Wesleyan University in Connecticut; Ruth
Melkonian-Hoover, Ph.D. candidate in political science and summer graduate assistant to
the Latin American and Caribbean Program (LACP) for the summer; and Becky Castle,
program coordinator for the LACP. Ambassador Barnes provided superb leadership to
the delegation; Dr. Chand brought his expertise on Mexico and wrote the first draft of this
report; Ms. Melkonian-Hoover provided excellent background research, compiled the
briefing books, and co-authored an article with me providing post-electoral analysis of
the 1997 process; and Ms. Castle worked on logistics and trouble-shooting and drafted
portions of this report.

In addition, Dr. Denise Dresser, professor at Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de
México (ITAM) in Mexico served as a technical advisor to the delegation and secured
several of our meetings. Dr. David Carroll, associate director to the LACP and Dr.
Jennifer McCoy, senior research associate to the LACP, worked on preparations for and
follow-up to the trip. I would also like to offer a special thanks to Miguel Cornejo, who
left the Carter Center in mid-July for graduate school. He did a very good job of making
travel plans, arranging schedules, and keeping the LACP organized. His replacement,
Shannon Culbertson, promises to be equally skillful.

Dr. Robert A. Pastor
Atlanta, Georgia
Sept. 1, 1997
I. INTRODUCTION

During its week-long trip to Mexico, the Carter Center delegation met with political party leaders and candidates, representatives of the major domestic observer groups, political analysts, and officials from both the Federal Election Institute (IFE) and the Federal Election Tribunal (TRIFE). In addition, the delegation visited various polling sites on election day in Mexico City and in the states of Mexico, Hidalgo, and Querétaro. (See Appendix A for the delegation’s meeting schedule).

The Carter Center has followed the development of Mexico’s electoral process very closely for a decade. In that context, the 1997 midterm elections represent a significant advance toward democracy. All the major political parties accepted both the process and the results of the elections with a few significant exceptions involving incidents in the state elections of Campeche, Colima, and certain federal districts in Chihuahua. Victories by opposition parties, the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) in the governor’s race for Mexico City and the National Action Party (PAN) in the governor’s race for Querétaro and Nuevo León, promptly were recognized by the government. Mexico’s electoral institutions, particularly IFE, showed considerable maturity and objectivity in their conduct of the elections. Also, Mexicans themselves turned out in record numbers, demonstrating a high degree of civic enthusiasm. In Mexico City, participation rates approached 75 percent; nationally they hovered around 60 percent. Higher participation rates indicated that citizens believed their votes would count, although pre-election surveys revealed that 35-46 percent of the electorate still had doubts about the process’ integrity.¹

The elections likely will have major institutional consequences that will aid in the consolidation of democracy. According to final results, the PRI received 239 of 500 seats in the lower house with 39.1 percent of the vote; the PAN, 122 seats with 26.6 percent of the vote; and the PRD, 125 seats with 25.7 percent of the vote. Two smaller parties, the Worker’s Party (PT) allied with the PRI and the Mexican Green Party (PVMG), control six and eight seats respectively.² Other small parties, such as the Popular Socialist Party (PPS), the Cardenista Front for National Reconstruction (PFCRN), and the Authentic

² Since 300 of the 500 seats in the Chamber of Deputies are allocated on a first-past-the-post system, a party can win a smaller percentage of the votes than another party and receive more seats. The party with more votes in terms of percentage may have won those votes in a few selected areas, while the party with fewer voters could have won more seats in a more dispersed area by a smaller margin. This explains why the PRD with fewer votes (actually less than 1 percentage point) than the PAN won three more seats in the Chamber.

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Party of the Mexican Revolution (PANRM), failed to meet the minimum 2 percent of the vote needed for representation in the Chamber under the 1996 electoral reforms.

The loss of the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party’s (PRI) majority in the lower house, Mexico’s Chamber of Deputies, will transform the Chamber, requiring a degree of flexibility and accommodation by the PRI that it has rarely exhibited before. It is possible that the opposition parties might reverse roles with the PRI, imposing their legislative proposals and compelling the PRI to boycott. However, we think it is more likely that the opposition will press its agenda, but the parties will find new ways to respond to each other’s agenda.

The PAN and PRD likely will push for speeding investigations of corruption scandals, decentralization of political power to the states and municipalities, and greater accountability of the president to the legislature particularly in financial matters. Both the separation of powers and federalism thus will become more of a reality in the wake of the 1997 election results. The PRI’s victory in Mexico City already has prompted some decentralization, with the president consenting to forego his legal power to nominate the capital’s police chief and attorney general in favor of Cardenas’ nominees.1

II. THE NEW CONTEXT OF THE ELECTIONS; THE 1996 ELECTORAL REFORMS

The 1997 elections worked well as an exercise in democratic responsibility largely because the legal framework for fair elections had evolved in a positive direction through a series of electoral reforms in 1990, 1993, 1994, and 1996. The Carter Center sent numerous delegations to study this process and issued four detailed reports.4 The key issues in the 1990, 1993, and 1994 reforms focused on developing an accurate voter registration list, designing a fraud-proof voter I.D. card, creating an autonomous body to conduct Mexican elections, institutionalizing a mechanism to resolve electoral conflicts, and criminalizing certain kinds of electoral fraud.

The 1996 reforms built on these earlier reforms but went much further in meeting the concerns of Mexican opposition parties, domestic observers, and international groups. The latest reforms bolstered IFE’s independence from both executive and legislative control. IFE no longer would be headed by the Interior Minister but by a citizen chosen

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by consensus and approved by a two-thirds vote of the Chamber of Deputies. The right
to vote in IFE decisions now is limited to eight electoral councils (the successors of
citizen-councilors) and the IFE president; legislative councilors no longer are eligible to
vote but, like political party representatives, they could participate in discussions.
Electoral councilors are barred from involvement in party politics or government for three
years prior to their designation and are chosen by consensus subject to two-thirds of the
vote in the Chamber of Deputies. They are to serve six-year terms.

The reforms reduced the overrepresentation of the majority party in the Senate by
allocating 32 of its 128 seats based on proportional representation. In the Chamber, the
majority party has been limited to no more than 300 seats with its share of seats not to
exceed its share of the vote by more than 8 percent. Significantly, the reforms provided
for the first direct election for mayor of Mexico City since the 1920s, and in principle
opened the door for Mexicans living abroad to vote in the presidential elections of 2000.
These two reforms were expected to benefit the opposition. The PRD and PAN enjoyed
strong support in Mexico City, and Mexicans abroad were presumed to be more
supportive of the opposition, although few reliable studies on their political preferences
have been conducted.

The 1996 reforms established the Supreme Court as the final arbiter of Mexican
election results for the first time. The TRIFE was made an integral part of the Supreme
Court and now is staffed by judges appointed by the chief justice with the approval of
two-thirds of the of the Senate. Previously, they were appointed by a two-thirds vote of
the Chamber of Deputies at the president’s suggestion. By ending the practice by which
incoming federal deputies and senators ruled on their own elections’ validity under the
1993 reforms (autocalificación) and deciding to make TRIFE responsible for certifying
the results of the upcoming presidential elections also bolstered TRIFE as the final
authority on electoral questions. The Supreme Court was given the right to review the
constitutionality of election laws and decisions at both the federal and state levels. This
reform is significant because it allows the Supreme Court to exercise judicial review in a
political system traditionally dominated by the executive and strike down retrograde state
election laws passed by legislatures dominated by local strongmen (caudillos),
particularly in the southern part of the country. The reform also makes it harder for
opposition parties to take their case to international tribunals on the legal ground that
Mexico lacks an internal appeals process for violations of political rights.

In the area of campaign and party finances, the new reforms obliged political
parties to submit detailed reports on income and expenditure flows, not just during the
campaign, as under the 1994 reforms, but on an annual basis as well. The 1996 reforms
accepted the principle that political parties would draw the bulk of their financing from
public rather than private sources but failed to agree on the amount of public financing.
The PRI wanted to set public financing at much higher levels than PAN and PRD. In the
end, PRI deputies voted alone to approve an unprecedented US$278 million in public
financing for all political parties, with 30 percent being allocated equally among all
parties and 70 percent according to their share of the vote in the last election.
Accordingly, the PRI stood to receive about US$111.5 million, the PAN US$66 million, and the PRD US$49 million for the 1997 campaign. The limit on the size of individual contributions was lowered from 1 percent to .05 percent of public financing (roughly US$139,000 for 1997).

While campaign spending limits continue to be very high, the shift toward public financing means opposition parties will find it easier to reach those spending limits, unlike in the past, when only the PRI could spend its allotment. By expanding the level of public financing, the new campaign finance regime raised the amount of money available for all three parties, not only the PRI. The shift toward public financing and stringent monitoring of political party finances should have a dampening effect on political corruption. The 1996 electoral reforms also sought to improve media access by allowing IFE to spend the equivalent of 12 percent of public financing to buy time slots for political party advertising. IFE was charged with the task of monitoring the electronic media for signs of bias, issuing reports on media coverage every 15 days during a campaign and pressuring for a more open media climate.

III. COMPARING THE 1994 AND 1997 ELECTORAL PROCESSES

A. Impact of Economic Crisis

Unlike the 1994 elections, the 1997 elections took place in the wake of two years of severe economic contraction induced by the peso crisis of 1994-95 and the subsequent austerity measures imposed by the Zedillo administration. The impact of this economic crisis coupled with the electoral system’s growing openness help explain the PRI’s heavy losses in 1997 and concomitant opposition gains around the country.

B. Observer Groups

In 1994, domestic and international observers played a crucial role in monitoring polling stations and pressuring for more equitable media coverage and changes in election laws. The number of nonparty domestic observers declined from about 89,000 in 1994 to around 30,000 (20,000 accredited for NGOs and 13,000 as individuals) in 1997, while the number of international observers fell from around 943 to about 300. This decrease probably was due to several factors: 1) less attention given to legislative rather than presidential elections; 2) observer groups’ recognition that the post-1994 electoral reforms addressed many of these problems; and 3) the growing capacity of political parties to post representatives in the country’s approximately 105,000 polling stations. Increasingly, the task of observation fell to the political parties themselves rather than observers. As evidence of this trend, the political parties were able to field pollwatchers at virtually all of the polling sites during the July 6 elections. The domestic observers found that the PRI fielded party representatives at 95-100 percent of observed casillas,
while the PAN had representatives at 77-82 percent and the PRD at 63-75 percent of the casillas observed. According to an electoral councilor, the improvement over 1994 lay in the coordination of the PAN and PRD so that together, they covered nearly 100 percent of the casillas. Most domestic observers viewed this trend with satisfaction rather than concern, seeing it as a sign of political maturation.

Attacks in 1996 and 1997 on groups such as the Mexican Academy for Human Rights (AMDH) and the Civic Alliance for their heavy reliance on external funding sources were troubling. AMDH leaders were chastised for accepting a grant of $420,000 from the European Union (EU), which the Mexican government persuaded to rescind the grant. The EU rejected a compromise whereby the money would have been funneled to AMDH by an IFE trust fund. Less controversial was a fund of US$1.5 million created by the Mexican government and administered by the U.N. Development Program (UNDP) to finance domestic observers groups through a committee set up by IFE. This again was another difference from 1994 when UNDP had financed observer groups directly. The UNDP money mostly was spent on national level groups rather than observer groups in the states, many of whom only dimly aware of the fund’s existence. Some PRI leaders accused domestic observer group leaders of being biased in favor of the opposition, particularly the PRD.

In 1997, the Mexican observer groups organized sophisticated monitoring projects of several different phases of the electoral process in addition to the qualitative and quantitative observation of election day procedures and the vote count. For example, the Mexican Academy of Human Rights and Movimiento por la Certidumbre (Movement of the Certainty) monitored media access and bias for television, radio, and print media: Asociación Nacional Cívica Femenina (National Women’s Civic Association or Ancifem) assessed the training provided by IFE to the election observers; Civic Alliance monitored vote buying and improper state influence of the vote (coacción); the Mexican Commission of Human Rights monitored the special prosecutor for Electoral Crimes and the Federal Electoral Tribunal for dispute resolution; and the Mexican Academy of Human Rights monitored political parties’ campaign expenditures.

For the most part, the observers were satisfied with election day procedures, though they expressed concern about the number of election officials who failed to show up on election day and the serious irregularities in Chiapas, where 160 casillas could not function at all because of disruption by protesters. The compilation of statistics from the survey forms used on election day is very useful for continued improvement of the process. At the time of this writing, The Carter Center received such reports from several organizations, including Presencia Ciudadana, Ancifem, and Movimiento por la Certidumbre, and hope the Civic Alliance also will provide a summary of their qualitative observation. Increasing sophistication of the quick counts by the observer groups is reflected in the accuracy of the projections by the various groups, as seen in Table III below.
C. The Changing Role of Polling and Quick Counts

Other major changes include the growing importance of the Programa de Resultados Preliminares (PREP), the proliferation of pre-election opinion surveys and exit polls, and the declining importance of the numerous quick counts conducted by various organizations. In the 1994 elections, the lack of credibility of the Mexican electoral process made people look to many different sources, including quick counts, to divine results. Although the 1994 PREP results were accurate, in an effort to build confidence in the process, IFE implemented a more efficient, streamlined PREP in 1997. This PREP mandated that the results of each casilla be sent electronically from the office of the state electoral institute to the federal counting center at the IFE office in the Federal District for compilation and for posting in, among other places, the World Wide Web.

In previous elections (before 1994), the public had little confidence in the vote count as results sometimes were withheld, and when they were reported, the ruling party often was ahead. In 1997, the public received a plethora of results, although not everyone understood the difference between quick counts and exit polls. Quick counts use results of the actual count at a random sample of casillas to project a baseline for the results; exit polls use interviews with citizens after they voted—often employing techniques to ensure randomness of the sample—to estimate election results.

As it turned out, the difference between opinion polls conducted in June and quick counts and exit polls were quite small.
### Table I (A): COMPARING JUNE OPINION SURVEYS WITH IFE RESULTS
(Federal Deputy Elections)

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### Table I (B): DIFFERENCES BETWEEN JUNE OPINION SURVEYS AND IFE RESULTS
(Federal Deputy Elections)

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**Source:** Consulta S.A.

### Table II (A): COMPARING JUNE OPINION SURVEYS WITH IFE RESULTS
(Mexico City Governor’s Race)

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### Table II (B): DIFFERENCES BETWEEN JUNE OPINION SURVEYS AND IFE RESULTS  
(Mexico City Governor’s Race)

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Source: Consulta S.A.

### Table III (A): COMPARING QUICK COUNT WITH IFE RESULTS  
(Mexico City Governor’s Race)

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### Table III (B): DIFFERENCES BETWEEN QUICK COUNT AND IFE RESULTS  
(Mexico City Governor’s Race)

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<th>Organization</th>
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<th>PRI</th>
<th>PRD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consulta S.A.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berumen</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alianza Cívica</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COPARMEX</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIRT</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEO</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presencia Ciudadana</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Consulta S.A.
Several organizations, including Consulta S.A.-Mitovsky International for Televisa, TV Azteca, COPARMEX, and the Center for Opinion Studies at the University of Guadalajara (CEO-UAG), conducted quick counts at the state level in Sonora, Colima, Campeche, Nuevo León, and Querétaro. In Nuevo León, the Consulta S.A.-Mitovsky quick count gave the PAN 49 percent of the vote as against PRI’s 41 percent; the COPARMEX quick count came up with almost identical numbers as the Consulta S.A.-Mitovsky poll. The official results, however, gave the state to the PAN by a margin of 15 percent with the PAN getting 53 percent of the vote and the PRI 38 percent. In Querétaro, the Consulta-Mitovsky quick count showed the PAN ahead by 4 percent, while the COPARMEX quick count showed the PAN in the lead by 6 percent. In the end, the PAN won the state by a margin of more than 10 percentage points with the PAN capturing 52 percent of the vote against the PRI’s 41 percent. In both Querétaro and Nuevo León, quick counts succeeded in predicting the winner of the gubernatorial elections but with less accuracy than most of the quick counts conducted in the governor’s race for Mexico City.

A problem with at least one of the state-level quick counts was the premature release of results based on an insufficient percentage of the sample. In Sonora, for example, COPARMEX released early results from its quick count that showed the PAN ahead by a wafer-thin margin of less than 1 percent, even though the PRI ultimately won the state. As more polling stations in COPARMEX’s sample came in, particularly from rural areas, it became clear that the PRI won the governor’s race.

Exit polls conducted by TV Azteca, Televisa, Reforma, Indemere-Louis Harris, and the Chamber of Radio and Television Industry (CIRT) were also very accurate. The Indemere-Louis Harris poll, for example, showed Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas winning Mexico City with 46 percent of the vote—just a point below the official result, while the CIRT poll gave him a 2 to 1 margin over PRI candidate Alfredo del Mazo. Exit polls by Reforma and TV Azteca also placed Mr. Cárdenas far ahead of his rivals with 45 percent and 52 percent of the vote, respectively.

The high level of accuracy characterizing Mexican opinion surveys, exit polls, and quick counts testifies to the growing civic maturity of the Mexican population who clearly are willing to tell the truth to pollsters. It also confirms the technical sophistication of Mexican polling organizations and their international collaborators. The fact that all the counts were close and accurate bodes well for the democratic process as it removes a significant source of past political tension and electoral anxiety.

IV. CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE OF DEMOCRACY IN MEXICO

Despite these major advances, several problems remain that will need to be addressed if democracy in Mexico is to be deepened and strengthened. One reason why
all parties accepted the results is because each won some significant seats. Had the results been one-sided, it is possible there would have been less confidence in the process.

A. Problem of Election Fraud in Rural Areas

As a federal organization, IFE has no authority to intervene in state election disputes where local strongmen (caciques) often seek to influence the outcome by illicit means, particularly vote buying. This problem is particularly acute in the southern, more rural portion of the country, where Mexican revolutionary and post-revolutionary leaders govern through caciques rather than supplant them as in the central and northern parts. There are several possible solutions to the problem of caciquismo.

First, all election crimes at any level—federal, state, or local—should be classified as federal crimes and should be prosecuted aggressively. Unfortunately, the Special Prosecutor’s Office so far has shown little initiative in doing so.

Second, IFE could run both state and federal elections, but this is likely to be seen as a centralizing initiative at a time when power is devolving toward Mexico’s regions.

Third, TRIFE now has the legal right to rule on electoral violations, and the Supreme Court has the mandate to assess the election laws’ constitutionality at any level. Thus both the Supreme Court and TRIFE could spur improvement in the electoral process at the state and local levels and could trigger the use of executive power to carry out TRIFE and Supreme Courts rulings in settings where local caciques still determine electoral outcomes. This is precisely what occurred in the southern states of the United States in the 1960s and 1970s when only the aggressive use of federal judicial power could overcome local resistance to federal legislation guaranteeing civil and electoral rights for all U.S. citizens.

B. Vote Buying and Coacción

Vote buying and using of state funds to influence voters continue to be of concern to Mexicans. In fact, the Civic Alliance conducted a systematic analysis of this problem in Yucatan. Some Mexican analysts claim that vote buying still is prevalent in Mexico in rural areas, despite civic education campaigns to assure citizens that their votes are secret, because of traditional values and the obligation individuals feel to carry through on promises to vote a certain way. Defining coacción as the conditioning of the delivery of public programs on the vote for a particular party or using public programs to influence the vote of the populace, and defining vote buying as offering money or goods in exchange for voting credentials or a vote for a party or candidate, the Civic Alliance reported the following types of actions:
Coacción (as percent of municipalities observed in Yucatan)

63% — Offering money or goods in exchange for vote.
58% — Visits to homes to locate sympathizers and credentials data.
58% — Destruction of party propaganda.
58% — Canceling benefits of social programs to sympathizers of opposition parties.
42% — Threats to reduce or eliminate social programs if opposition were to win.

Vote buying

95% — Social programs offered to clientele.
84% — Advance payments from Programa del Campo (Procampo).
79% — Distribution of foods (despensas).
68% — Distribution of agricultural products.
63% — Gifts distributed by parties at rallies.
52% — Construction materials.

As confidence rises in the secrecy of the vote and voters are educated about their rights, vote buying should decline. Meanwhile, Mexico may want to review the Taiwanese model which offers monetary incentives to those who can document incidents of vote buying to authorities, thereby removing any pecuniary motive for accepting bribes for votes and exposing vote-buyers to potential discovery and arrest. Clear abuses of authority, such as threatening to eliminate social programs if the opposition were to win or illegal collection of credentials, must be eliminated or prosecuted. However, there is a thin line between the normal and acceptable advantage of the incumbent in advertising his/her social programs to a populace during the campaign and abusing that advantage.

C. Evolution of Mexico's Electoral Institutions

Both IFE and TRIFE have made enormous strides in their institutional development. As Sergio Aguayo, a leader of the Civic Alliance and respected observer of Mexican elections said: "We now have an electoral authority that we can trust." The management of the 1997 electoral process and the final results attest to IFE’s growing professionalism and competence. IFE’s General Council has had to work with many employees who were holdovers when IFE functioned as government agency. Instead of purging such employees from the organization, the General Council’s solution has been to minimize the discretion such employees possess by finely tuned regulations, an accurate voter registration list, and outside observation. This is a wise and appropriate solution to the problems of a sprawling organization such as IFE which consists of over 8,000 employees. However, Juan Molinar, an electoral councilor suggests it might be appropriate to establish a clearer career track for IFE employees to cement their loyalties to the organization and undermine any ties they may have to state and local cliques that might compromise their performance.
IFE and the electoral system will have to confront two challenges in the near future. Between 1997 and 2000, responsibility for the voter registration list (padrón) will pass from IFE to the National Population Registry (Renapo) of the Interior Ministry, which is developing a general list of the population. The idea is to reduce redundancy, but the change places the padrón back in the hands of the executive. IFE and other organizations will have to take steps to ensure this change is administered with a minimum of confusion and the Interior Ministry manages the list with strict impartiality, with IFE exercising an effective supervisory role. IFE and Renapo also will have to face the formidable technical challenge of creating a voting system for the many Mexicans who reside abroad that is not prone to error or fraud.

The Carter Center delegation was very impressed by TRIFE’s professional qualifications, competence, and impartiality. The emergence of TRIFE facilitates the depoliticization of Mexican elections by providing a clear legal mechanism for dispute resolution, acts as a check of IFE’s decisions, and opens the door to revisions of state and federal election laws. In some cases, TRIFE has upheld IFE decisions including one to fine the PRI US$625,000 for vote buying. In other cases, TRIFE has overruled an IFE decision barring the government from publicizing public works programs 30 days before the election. No pattern in favor of one or another party can be discerned in TRIFE’s decision-making. The Supreme Court specifies TRIFE’s budget which then is approved by the legislature without any executive involvement. Opposition parties have few doubts about TRIFE’s professional competence and its judges integrity, but the PAN in particular is concerned they are much too conservative in their judicial philosophy. PAN leaders said they wished that TRIFE would use the law more aggressively to promote democracy at all levels of the system, as it is now legally empowered to do. Since the dispute resolution process still is very much in its incipient stages, this report cannot evaluate the TRIFE’s performance in that regard. However, The Carter Center does plan to send an expert or a small team to assess dispute resolution procedures in the near future.

The Mexican Commission of Human Rights Preliminary Report (Aug. 8) gives initial indication of improvements in the electoral dispute process. The Commission fielded observers in the regional offices of the special prosecutor for electoral crimes on election day as well as the regional offices of the Federal Electoral Tribunal during the complaint period which ended Aug. 3. The special prosecutor for electoral crimes was created as a result of a political accord shortly before the 1994 national elections. The number of suspected electoral crimes reported was cut in half in 1997 compared to 1994 (from 525 in 1994 to 225 reported as of July 29, 1997). Those complaints were fairly evenly divided among the three major political parties, while the IFE itself reported one-third of the total. The Commission noted that the crimes reported were fairly minor but also expressed concern that the Public Ministries charged with addressing the reported crimes were neither adequately trained nor prepared to deal with the crimes on election day. The Commission also noted the need to better educate the public and the parties on what legally constitutes an electoral crime.
The number of complaints about election procedures made to the Federal
Electoral Tribunal dramatically decreased from 1,800 in 1994. The Commission reported
that as of the close of the complaint period on Aug. 3, 1997, the five regional offices had
received and ruled on 170 complaints: 76 from the PRI, 28 from the PAN, 46 from the
PRD, and 10 from other parties. Of the 170 complaints, 8 were found to have merit, 87
had partial merit, 19 were declared to be unfounded, 31 were rejected, and 8 were not
addressed.5 The complaints resulted in the annulment of 930 casillas (representing less
than 1 percent of the total casillas) for reasons of errors in the vote count, casillas opened
in the wrong place, unauthorized election officials, unregistered people voting, and in some
cases, violence or intimidation.

D. Cost of Mexican Elections

Mexican elections have become excessively expensive. Between 1990-1994, the
government spent around US$4 billion on the electoral process. The 1997 electoral
process cost around US$590 million, not including the US$278 million of public
financing. Much of this money was spent on developing an accurate voter registration
list and photo I.D. cards. In addition, a small photo of each voter was attached to the
voter registration list for the 1997 midterm elections. An elementary calculation for the
1997 elections reveals that Mexico spent about US$9.60 for every citizen (i.e. US
$868 million in expenses and financing divided by an estimated 90 million inhabitants).
The amount of money spent on Mexican elections reflects the historically low credibility
of Mexican elections as well as the PRI's own desire to set very high campaign
expenditure ceilings. One remaining challenge for Mexican democracy will be to reduce
those ceilings to more moderate levels if PRI deputies can be persuaded to do so and to
reduce the electoral system's complexity.

E. Problem of Electronic Media Bias

The problem of electronic media bias in Mexico has ameliorated considerably. In
1997, both Televisa and TV Azteca provided somewhat balanced coverage of all political
parties and candidates. A televised debate between Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas and Alfredo
del Mauro for the governor's race in Mexico City signaled the electronic media's growing
openness. Escalating competition and more discerning viewers have encouraged the
electronic media to become more objective in their coverage. Nonetheless, the PRI
continues to enjoy an advantage with regard to media coverage for several reasons. First,
the extremely high campaign expenditure ceilings continue to favor the PRI, which
proporionately has more resources than the opposition, although this problem has

5 The numbers in the Commission's report broken down by party and by resolution do
not add up to 170.
diminished because 90 percent of all financing now is public. Second, as the party in power, the PRI can use public works as occasions for political propaganda, although austerity programs under President Zedillo have rendered this a less potent issue than in the past. There also are indications that while the national electronic media has become more open, journalists in print and broadcast media in some states still are not in a position to report objectively.

Mexican analysts suggest at least three ways in which the opening of the Mexican electronic media can be accelerated. First, radio and television stations' owners should be able to renew their licenses automatically based on transparent and verifiable criteria without any government discretion. If television and radio station owners know their licenses will be renewed routinely, they will have less reason to tailor their coverage to suit the party in power. Second, the government could license more television and radio stations. The proliferation of new television and radio stations would in turn foster greater pluralism in the electronic media and contribute to more balanced coverage by increasing competition and viewer choice. Third, journalists in Mexico can be sued for defamation by public figures without it being necessary to demonstrate "actual malice" or "willful disregard for the truth" by offending journalists. A higher standard for public figures seeking redress for defamation would enhance the public's ability to hold public officials accountable for their actions in office and facilitate the development of a freer media.

F. Credibility of Mexican Elections

The high turnout rates in 1997 and the satisfaction with the outcome by all the major players indicate the credibility of the Mexican elections has improved considerably. Public opinion surveys also rank electoral fraud at the bottom of the list of problems that Mexicans consider important, far behind crime and poverty (see Mittelstadt survey). This is a significant achievement, but it will take several more elections before credibility is fully established. The credibility that has been gained can easily be squandered, particularly if several state elections become tainted with charges of fraud.

V. CONCLUSION

In recent years, Mexico has made important strides toward a more open, competitive electoral system within a framework of laws and institutions that the political parties and observer groups trust. The 1997 midterm elections mark an important step forward toward democracy, but it remains unclear whether the general satisfaction with the July 1997 election derives from the results (in which all the political parties won something important) or from the process' fairness. Beyond this elemental consideration, certain problems remain to be addressed, such as the persistence of fraud in rural areas.
Obviously, the acid test for Mexico's newly emerging democracy will be how well it handles the presidential elections in 2000. The Carter Center will continue to remain actively engaged in studying Mexican elections and institutions and will do a follow-up study of how TRIFE addressed the legal challenges in the 1997 elections.

Two days after the election, the study mission discusses its implications with Mexican political analyst Jorge Castroda and Mexico City assemblyman-activist Oscar Levin on July 8.

While Mexicans vote at a casilla in Queretaro on July 6, party observers verify their status with copies of the padrón.

Dr. Robert Pasour discusses election results with Ivo Wldenberg, president of the Federal Election Institute (IFE), on July 9.
KEY TERMS

AMDH
Mexican Academy for Human Rights

caciques
Local political bosses

casillas
Polling booths

CEO
Center for Opinion Studies

CEO-UAG
Center for Opinion Studies at the University of Guadalajara

CI RT
Chamber of Radio and Television Industry

Confederación Patronal de la República Mexicana (COPARMEX)
Management Confederation of the Mexican Republic

EU
European Union

IFE
Federal Election Institute

padrón
Voter registration list

PAN
National Action Party

PARM
Authentic Party of the Mexican Revolution

PFCRN
Cardenista Front for National Reconstruction

PPS
Popular Socialist Party

PRD
Party of the Democratic Revolution

Programa de Resultados Electorales Preliminares (PREP)
Preliminary Electoral Results Program

PRI
Institutional Revolutionary Party

PT
Worker's Party

PVEM
Mexican Green Party

Renap o
National Population Registry

Tribunal Electoral del Poder Judicial de la Federación (TRIFE)
Federal Election Tribunal

UAM
National Autonomous University of Mexico

UNDP
U.N. Development Program
Schedule – Carter Center Study Mission
Mexican Elections, July 6-10, 1997

Friday, July 4
4:00 p.m. IFE Session on General Electoral Information
8:00 p.m. Delegation Dinner to Discuss Objectives of Study Mission

Saturday, July 5
9:00 a.m. IFE Session on Preliminary Results
10:00 a.m. Meeting Between PRD Mayoral Candidate Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas and International Observers
10:30 a.m. IFE Session on Electoral Justice
12:30 p.m. Lunch with Dong Nguyen, Senior Political Officer, UN Electoral Assistance Division, Department of Political Affairs
2:00 p.m. Meeting with Cecilia Romero, Secretary-General of the PAN
4:30 p.m. Meeting with Alfredo Phillips Ojiteo, General Coordinator of International Affairs, PRI
6:00 p.m. Meeting with Magistrate Juan Molinar, Electoral Counselor, IFE

Sunday, July 6

Delegation divides into two teams -- one goes to Querétaro, the other remains in the Distrito Federal
8:00 a.m.  Watch Opening of a Polling Station
Day  Visit Polling Stations
6:00 p.m.  Watch Closing of Polling Stations and Vote Count

**Monday, July 7**

11:00 a.m.  Meeting with Ricardo Rivas Palacio, commentator for *La Crónica*
4:30 p.m.  Meeting with Charles Brayshaw, Deputy Chief of U.S. Mission
6:00 p.m.  Meeting with President José Luis de la Peña and Magistrate Jesus Orozco Hernández of the Electoral Tribunal of Judicial Power of the Federation
8:45 p.m.  Dinner with Matt Dippell, senior program officer, and Claudia Barrientos, Program Assistant, National Democratic Institute for International Affairs

**Tuesday, July 8**

8:00 a.m.  Meeting with Dong Nguyen, Senior Political Officer, U.N. Electoral Assistance Division, Department of Political Affairs
10:30 a.m.  Meeting with Alfredo Phillips Olmedo, General Coordinator of International Affairs, PRJ
12:00 a.m.  Meeting with COPARMEX’s Sergio Soto, Gabriel Funes, and Juan Manuel Beltran to Discuss Their Quick Count
1:30 p.m.  Lunch with Edgardo Mimica Miranda, Quick Count Specialist and Executive Secretary, Association of Banking Supervisory Authorities of Latin America and the Caribbean
5:00 p.m.  Meeting with Ricardo Pascoe, Spokesperson for the PRD
6:30 p.m.  Meeting with Felipe Calderón Hinojosa, President of PAN; Juan Antonio García Villa, PAN Representative at IFE; Augustín Navarro, PAN International Relations; Ana María León, PAN National Relations
8:00 p.m.  Delegation Dinner with Jorge Castañeda; Adolfo Aguilar, Senator for the Green Party; and Oscar León, Assemblyperson for State of Mexico, PRJ
Wednesday, July 9

9:00 a.m.  Meeting with Luz Rosales, President of Movimiento Ciudadano

11:00 a.m. Meeting with Magistrate Juan Molinar, Electoral Counselor, IFE

12:30 p.m. Meeting with José Woldenberg, President, General Council, IFE; and Manuel Carrillo, Coordinator of International Affairs, IFE

2:30 p.m.  Meeting with Sergio Aguayo, President, Alianza Cívica

5:00 p.m.  Meeting with Ulisses Beltran, Technical Advisor to the Mexican President

6:30 p.m.  Press Conference with El Nacional, El Universal, La Crónica

7:00 p.m.  Meeting with Vijay Vaitheswaran, Economist Correspondent for Latin America

8:00 p.m.  Dinner with Alfredo Phillips Olmedo, General Coordinator for International Affairs, PRI
# POLLING DAY REPORT

**JULY 6, 1997 MEXICAN ELECTIONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observer Name(s): ____________________</th>
<th>Time at Poll: (from __ to __)</th>
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<tr>
<td>State: ________________________________</td>
<td>Municipality __________________</td>
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<tr>
<td>Polling Site Number and Location: ____________________</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Were there sufficient voting personnel and materials present?</th>
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<tr>
<td>2. Were the ballot boxes sealed and visible?</td>
<td>Y ___ N ___</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Were persons turned away from voting due to problems with ID cards or the voter lists? If yes, quantify.</td>
<td>Y ___ How many? ___ N ___</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Were appropriate voting procedures followed?</td>
<td>Y ___ N ___</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Was the secrecy of the ballot protected?</td>
<td>Y ___ N ___</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Was there evidence of voter intimidation or vote buying?</td>
<td>Y ___ N ___</td>
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<td>7. Number of delegates present for each party: PRI ___ PAN ___ PRD ___ Other ___</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Were domestic observers present and from which organizations?</td>
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<td>If so, please list:</td>
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<td>9. Were other international visitors present and from which organizations?</td>
<td>Y ___ N ___</td>
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<tr>
<td>If so, please list:</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Were the police or military present and in what numbers?</td>
<td>Y ___ How many? ___ N ___</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. What is your overall evaluation of how voting was going at the polling site?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) good performance</td>
<td>(b) satisfactory</td>
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</table>

Comments (major problems and/or irregularities, significant patterns, etc.):
CARTER CENTER GROUP TO OBSERVE JULY 6 MEXICAN ELECTIONS

ATLANTA, GA—The Carter Center will sponsor a study mission to the July 6 elections in Mexico to assess the implementation of recent electoral reforms, especially mechanisms for resolving post-electoral grievances.

The Carter Center has long been interested in the electoral process in Mexico. Mexican leaders joined the Center’s election monitoring efforts in Haiti, Guyana, and the United States. In 1992, the Center was invited by national observer groups to witness elections in two Mexican states. In 1994, a small delegation of the Council of Freely Elected Heads of Government, based at The Carter Center’s Latin American and Caribbean Program, joined teams from the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs and the International Republican Institute to observe the national elections.

In April, while attending The Carter Center’s “Agenda for the Americas for the 21st Century” consultation, Mexico President Ernesto Zedillo publicly asked the Center to assess electoral reforms.

“For this reason, and because of the importance of the midterm elections in Mexico, we have decided to send a small study mission,” said Dr. Robert Pastor, director of the Latin American and Caribbean Program. “Unfortunately, with the short time before the election, the limited number of our staff, and the size and diversity of Mexico, we will not be able to undertake a full assessment of the election as we have in other countries, but look forward to learning more about the process.”

The group will meet with representatives from the Instituto Federal Electoral (IFE), the major political parties, and domestic observers prior to July 6. On election day, the delegation will divide into two teams. One team will remain in the federal district; the other will visit polling sites in Querétaro.
The delegation will be co-led by Dr. Pastor and Ambassador Harry Barnes, director of The Carter Center's Conflict Resolution and Human Rights Programs. Delegation members will include Dr. Vikram Chand, professor of political science at Wesleyan University; Mary Anne Chalker, president of LFC Insurance; Dr. Clint Smith, senior research associate at the Institute for International Studies of Stanford University; Ruth Melkonian-Hoover, doctoral candidate in political science at Emory University; and Becky Castle, program coordinator of The Carter Center's Latin American and Caribbean Program. Dr. Denise Dresser, professor of political science at ITAM in Mexico City, will serve as technical advisor.
We have concluded a one-week study mission to observe the electoral process in Mexico. This election represents a significant step in a long journey by Mexicans to institutionalize democracy. There were some irregularities and problems that need to be studied in order for the process to improve still further. Nonetheless, we view the elections as significant for two reasons: the people showed pride and enthusiasm in participating in the elections, believing that their vote was secret and would count, as it did, and the major parties were satisfied with the process and the results.

The Carter Center has been working with Mexican nongovernmental groups and observing the electoral process in Mexico for more than a decade. On April 28, on a visit to Atlanta, President Ernesto Zedillo publicly proposed that the Center study and assess the electoral process. Based on that request and other invitations, The Carter Center decided to send a small team to study the electoral process. We did not field the kind of delegation that we normally do because we did not have the resources and the time, and for that reason, we did not try to provide a comprehensive assessment of the electoral process. Instead, our team visited polling stations in three states - Hidalgo, Mexico, and Querétaro - and the Federal District. We also spent considerable time talking with leaders of the major political parties, officials from IFE and the Electoral Tribunal, leaders from nongovernmental groups that played an active role in the electoral process, and members of the government and the Congress.

We are aware that many organizations judged the election the day after. We have chosen to issue this statement several days later in order to have a little more distance from the process and to assess better the concerns of the political parties about the electoral process. On election day, we found the people eager to participate in the elections. The quick recognition by President Zedillo of Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas' victory reassured Mexicans that their votes counted, and that the PRI was ready to accept defeat in a free election. The victory of two governorships by the PAN and the fact that the majority of the people voted for opposition parties for the Chamber of Deputies were other signs that the political future of Mexico would involve more competition.

Still, there were some questions that we heard from the opposition parties with regard to elections in Campeche, Colima, Chiapas, and Sonora, and concern that the publication of the results for the legislature had been discontinued after reporting 87 percent of the polling stations on 3:45 p.m. on Monday. IFE officials informed us that
the official count began at the 300 districts on Wednesday morning, July 9, and they expected official results to be completed by Thursday afternoon.

Overall, we were encouraged that the political parties saw the election in positive terms and were eager to forge a more transparent and democratic political system. We discussed with them their suggestions for additional electoral reforms, including limits on campaign expenditures and fairer reporting in the media. We appreciated the invitation from the Electoral Tribunal to review the election-dispute mechanism. We also want to study the exit polls, the quick counts, and the official publication of the results to see if these have been converging or whether there might be some discrepancies regionally or nationally. The Carter Center intends to continue observing these and other major aspects of the electoral process.

The members of the delegation are: Robert Pastor, director of the Latin American Program at The Carter Center (LACP, CC); Harry Barnes, director of the Human Rights Program at The Carter Center; Becky Castle, program coordinator of the LACP, CC; Mary Anne Chalker of California, Dr. Vikram Chand, visiting assistant professor of Wesleyan University; and Ruth Melkonian-Hoover, LACP graduate assistant from Emory University.
The Fear Vote Gives Way to the Punishment Vote

The PRI's one-party rule may be over for Mexicans. We see the value of divided government and a check on corruption.

By MARIA A. CARRILLO

We've spent years fighting off any chance to be a democracy. Now, let's make sure we can handle it.

So said my mother on Sunday night after watching hours of televised election results. We were watching Mexican presidential elections from a different perspective, in which losers could go to court to challenge election results. It was quite a contrast from our typical election night where we would watch the returns come in, hoping for a leader to emerge from the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) that would show some signs of reform.

On Sunday night, we saw the PRI's dominance falter as a new party, the National Action Party (PAN), gained strength. The PRI's candidate, Enrique Peña Nieto, was leading in the early results, but the results started to shift as voters in the southwest of the country began to vote for PAN.

Public opinion is that a new era is possible in Mexico, where the PRI would not be expected by the electorate. The PRI's poor performance earlier this year has been seen as one of the reasons why PAN has gained strength.

Despite the PRI's struggles, many experts believe that Mexico's democracy is still in its early stages. The country has a long way to go before it can truly claim to be a democracy.

In 1997, however, the PRI did win an election that was considered a victory. But the PRI's victory was marred by controversy and charges of fraud.

Despite the challenges, the Mexican people have shown resilience and determination. They have fought for their rights and have not given up on the dream of a democratic society.

The PRI's sway over the past several decades has been a source of both pride and pain for Mexicans. On one hand, the PRI has provided stability and economic growth. On the other hand, it has also been criticized for corruption and lack of accountability.

It will be interesting to see how Mexico's democracy develops in the coming years. Will we see a stronger PAN gain power? Will the PRI continue to struggle? Only time will tell.
Mexican Voters' Anger Devastates Ruling Party

By John Ward Anderson

MEXICO CITY, July 12—The final results from Mexico's midterm elections are still being tallied, but the verdict is clear: fueled by rampant corruption and government policies that destroyed the savings and incomes of voters, the new election laws that mandated the ruling party's most possible popular victory have failed.

Most complete returns show that the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) lost its 60-year majority in the lower house of Congress by about 10 seats. The PRI also lost about 18 seats and its two-thirds majority in the Senate; at least two of six state governors' races, three state legislative houses; numerous municipal elections; and the biggest blow of all—the race for mayor of Mexico City, which was won massively by Injub Cuauhtemoc Cardenas of the Democratic Revolution Party (PRD).

"The resignation of the old system is impossible, there's no way back," said former President Emilio Lopez. "And now that people know the PRI can lose, it will lose and lose and lose.

Many analysts say the results herald the beginning of a multi-party democratic in Mexico. The newly independent lower house, which previously was a rubber stamp for the president, is likely to be a tough adversary on budget matters and is expected to launch aggressive probes of current and past corruption. It also may demand a more independent judiciary.

"After those elections, no one can ever again refer to the Institutional Revolutionary Party as the only party, the state party or the anaplast of the government," President Ernesto Zedillo said as the extent of the PRI's landslide became apparent.

Based on tallies from last Sunday's elections by the Federal Electoral Institute, the PRI will lose from 348 to 345 seats in the 50-member Chamber of Deputies when it convenes Dec. 5, about 25% of the 511 seats needed for an absolute majority. The centrist National Action Party (PAN), or in PAN, and the PRD each will have about 120. As in many developments, the smallest parties could end up with the largest role since neither PAN nor a PAN-PRI alliance could emerge a majority without the help of the Green Party, which is likely to have eight to 10 seats, or the Labor Party, with six. Exact seat counts depend upon the propriety of the vote each party received and will be available in a few weeks, election authorities said.

In opinion surveys and interviews, voters said they abandoned the long-ruling party because they feared rising inflation and shrinking public works, and because opposition members won. All that is due to the PRI's loss of power. The PRI's loss of power also has meant that the PRI's history of corruption is now in the hands of the PRI itself. The PRI now has a new image: "the PRI has a new image, and it's not a good one," said one PRI official. "The PRI is now a party of the PRI itself."

Despite setbacks, a virtually every corner of the country, returns showed that the PRI remains the dominant political force, with the only true nationwide machine. The PRI has won 50% of the votes in the last three elections, and 55% of the votes in the northern state of Nuevo Leon.

While most observers hailed the PRI as Mexico's newest civilian party in decades, the PRI's loss of power has been a source of concern for some observers, who fear that the PRI may become a "regional" party. The PRI's loss of power also has meant that the PRI's history of corruption is now in the hands of the PRI itself. The PRI now has a new image: "the PRI has a new image, and it's not a good one," said one PRI official. "The PRI is now a party of the PRI itself."

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Vote revolutionizes Mexican democracy

By Susan Ferrier

Mexico City

It's a new Mexican Revolution, and the promises are grand. Mexico's new lower house of Congress, once discredited as a rubber stamp for the Revolution- ary Institutional Party, will be demoralized by opposition deputies out to draw rolling party blood when they come to power this September.

After swelling in historic, victory in national elections July 6, an opposition coalition from left to right in a move to use its new muscle to investigate corrup-
tion in the Revolutionary Institutional Party, the PRI, and set a new political agenda that could touch everything from social service in relations with the United States.

The coalition is fragile. Although voted in on a majority with the PRI, the opposition part-
ties are strange bedfellows, despite demands by their own ide-
ologues and analysts.

"It's going to be very confusing for the United States at first, because there are going to be many different voices coming out of Mexico," said Robert Pat-
ter, who observed the Mexican elections and is director of the Latin American Program of the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington.

Mexico's 68-year-old organiza-
tion, the Party of the Democratic Revolution, or PRD, says it doesn't oppose free trade but would like to pursue a re-
examination of provisions of the North American Free Trade Agreement— including the intro-
duction of greater subsidies for grain— says it is hurting Mexican farmers.

But for now, says Ricardo Pas-
con, director of international affairs for the PRD, his party's priorities are corruption probes, more electoral reform and retaining the federal budget to see if social cuts can be reversed.

Along with the conservative opposition, the Party of National Action, known as the PAN, the PAN is acting as a watchdog, transferring more money from the federal government to states and offering Mexicans in the United States the right to vote.

The opposition appears most urgent in the drive to reverse a con-
gressional investigation into charges of alleged looting of pub-
l banks by former President Carlos Salinas de Gortari's brother.

Raul, who was a top PRI official and is now in jail, accused of mas-
terminating the killing of a politi-
can rival and laundering the money in a ring of senators, in the Chamber of Deputies, the lower house of Congress. The par-
ty's leader, Cuauhtemoc Carda-
nan, was elected mayor of Mexico City, considered the second-most
-powerful post in the country.

The ruling party was just over 38 percent of the vote, the highest total of all the parties, but lost its majority in the chamber for the first time in its 68-year history. It will still control the Senate.

President Ernesto Zedillo— who has already been a PRI presidential for the past seven decades comes from the PRI— will remain the most powerful politician in the country. But unlike all his predecessors, he will have to display partisan tension that might make Mexican politics more unpredictable under a divided government.

The day after the election, offi-
cials from the PAN and the PRI were meeting behind closed doors to develop a mutual agenda.

But leaders were also fighting publicity.

"The PRI will try to review everything if we don't stop them," said Agusti Navarro, the PAN's director of international affairs.

The PRI, which joined the PRD in advocating free-market reforms in the late 1980s, accuses the PRD of want to push back Mexico to a nationalist, closed market past. The PRI has accused the PAN of neglecting the poor and helping lead Mexico into financial disaster in 1994 by embracing Salinas, now a reviled figure in Mexico.

The wild card in the Mexican Congress could end up being the PRI, as a fractured party, divided over electoral reform and economic policies.

The PRI could spill out even in the Congress, with some deputies forming alliances with the PAN and others the PRD.

"This is like the New Testament," Navarro said. "Nothing has been written yet."
Viva Mexican Democracy

In Theory

By SAM DILLON

During the Mexican Revolution, violence stalked across the United States southern border so frequently that on the eve of World War I, the Army had half of its forces garrisoned there to prevent a Mexican invasion. Ever since, Americans have worried about instability in Mexico and most Americans have had it in the International Revolutionary Party, or PRI, that dominates Mexican politics.

The PRI has made the important decisions, headed the government, and dominated legislatures, and every six years accepted their own sweepstakes. Workers were kept submissive, and people and corporations — with connections — were able to get favors done.

And so the United States' generally passive reaction to PRI rule has, over the years, become a badge of national conscience. And one of the more popular ways for a PRI-influenced election may eventually develop into模具形式的 — single-party rule — for a bold new democratic experiment. And while many of the

American may miss the stability that one-party rule provided in Mexico.

Changes that may follow will seem healthy and striving in Americans, others may cause disasters. For Mexico, the transition will be a reform and open, new is likely to be the only sure and healthy alternative.

The deinstitutionalized opposition parties, the PRI elections may yield President Emilio Gonzalez de Lezo's better Mexico than the United States in crime and other problems. American corporations here may continue to invest more labor than the PRI-controlled unions. And anti-Americanism, sharply aroused from public displays in recent years, may be heard. The voice of Mexican democracy, for the United States, may be a more constant presence.

Mexico may become more confusing," said Robert J. Pimlott, director of the Center for Mexican Studies at the University of Texas at Austin, who directed a delegation of election observers to Mexico.

"There'll be more votes and it may seem disorganized, but Mexico has become more stable. Some people think volatility requires a strong hand, but they're mistaken. Stability requires a framework for peaceful change. That's what Mexico gets with these elections."

At the end, the seeming stability of the PRI was deceptive as the party grew decadent and corrupt.

In recent years, for example, Patricia Haggis, who helps Americans relocate their families in Mexico, watched her business fall in the months around every major election. Business was awful in 1988, when presidential balloting was won by candidates considered "unsteady" or "unreliable" by the PRI. "People feared some sort of revolution, she said. Americans also shied away in 1984, another election year when Mexico seemed headed toward chaos. This stifling of business forced the third of American families who use Mexico City's tourist and service industries, the third of the Mexican families who rationalized the oil fields in 1984, who broke with the PRI a decade ago to form its own party. On the lower branch of Congress, opposition parties declined their personal marginal claims and began preparing for a turnover in the PRI that would allow them to give people more than just the PRI in 1985. And while the PRI is still the main line of political parties, it is clear that the PRI is still a force.

Economic Ties That Bind

American's craving for stability is understandable. Mexico has at least $11 billion in American investments. Billions of dollars of American capital have poured into Mexico's petroleum supply. Each year more than 1 million American-owned marine vessels call at Mexican ports, and a million or more Americans head north, legally and illegally, in supply critical labor for America's fields and factories. The United States Embassy says 300,000 Americans live in Mexico, many in government, many in professions or business.

The Pimlott, a State Island mayor has maneuvered his own head-turning business for 25 years, including executives as work for American or Mexican companies here. "I think the elections were impotent, a real test of Mexico's maturity," he said. "But I see years of growth and turmoil, and I'm not so sure the new PRI will manage the change. The PRI is an oligarchy — a personal political organization. But it is a combination of incredibly strong, elderly, and it has a lot of money in its secretorra."

The arrangements that may come in the picture, a government that is future Congress will consist of the PRI government's United States. The new Congress will also conduct investigations into economic corruption. To some Americans, its may appear that Mexico is growing more since the country was ever sterile that has accumulated over decades.

What Americans would like to see, but are unlikely to get, are major new approaches to these most pressing issues. They are a larger immigration policy. But the Congress has not been successful in their legislative efforts.

Both were members in the Mexican election campaigns.

The major security issues in Mexico — the increase in crime and especially kidnappings, the growing importance of Mexican gangs in the narcotics trade, the corruption of Mexican law enforcement — are those things that are changing as a result of an election. 1985 is an election that is being controlled by the PRI, which has been in power for over 30 years. The question is, "Who is going to change?"

The answer to the question is, "Those things are not going to change over time."
Gains by Opposition Confirmed in Mexico

BY JULIA PRESTON

MEXICO-CITY, July 14—Official results gave the first indication that opposition parties were a major force in power in national elections this month, sending new plowshares into a country that had been a monopoly of the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI).

The official tabulation showed that the \n
\n
Party of the Democratic Revolution (P.D.R.), \n
which represented a new spark in the shaggy, but its majority in the lower \n
House of Congress, that the party \n
will have the largest delegation in both houses of the legislature.

The PRI, which has been the most powerful political force in the country since its founding in 1929, and its allies will divide the seats.

The PRI will continue to dominate the Senate, but it is no longer the only stable political force. Several other parties have been formed in recent years, and the opposition parties now have a stronger voice in the Mexican political scene.

KEEPING TRACK

Mexican Elections

Critical tests for the future of the PRI in Mexico will be held in August, after an impressive showing in the July elections. The PRI, which has dominated Mexican politics for decades, is facing a growing challenge from opposition parties.

The opposition parties have a combined strength of 30 percent, compared to the PRI's 60 percent. This is the highest level of opposition in recent history, and it is expected to continue to grow.

The PRI's reduction in power has significant implications for Mexico's political future. It is likely that the PRI will continue to be a dominant force, but its dominance will be challenged by a growing opposition that is gaining momentum.

The New York Times

July 15, 1997
El gran paso de México

ROBERT A. PATTERSON y RICK WEISBECKER

Está dentro del interés de los Estados Unidos que México tenga una economía creciente y una política interna con cambios pacíficos.

La democracia es un telón de fondo en el que se juegan todos los temas. La revolución de 1910 se tradujo en un sistema de partidos que permitió que a la coalición política se le asignaran algunas responsabilidades y que los ciudadanos tuvieran algunas representaciones en el proceso de cambio. En México, la presencia de los partidos políticos ha sido fundamental para el desarrollo del país.

En el Centro Carter de Atlanta, he visto durante más de una década para reflexionar el pensamiento democrático y el mismo llamado a las puertas de la política en América Latina. En el Centro Carter, la democracia política se ha transformado en un hecho que ha permitido el desarrollo político de la nación. La democracia en México se ha relacionado con el sistema de partidos políticos que han jugado un papel importante en el proceso de cambio.

Los indicadores de este cambio para los partidos políticos mexicanos son muy importantes. En este sentido, Estados Unidos ha tenido que trabajar con el presidente último de México para ayudar a fortalecer el sistema de partidos políticos en México. La jerarquía del partido político también ha sido importante en el proceso de cambio.

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