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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 (IFE) 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-electoral 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--**and 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 Chiapas. 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.<sup>1</sup>

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 (PVEM), control six and eight seats respectively.<sup>2</sup> Other small parties, such as the Popular Socialist Party (PPS), the Cardenista Front for National Reconstruction (PFCRN), and the Authentic

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<sup>1</sup> See Cornelius, Wayne J. "The Fear Vote Gives Way to the Punishment Vote." *The Los Angeles Times*, July 9, 1997.

<sup>2</sup> 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.

Party of the Mexican Revolution (PARM), 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 speedier 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 PRD's victory in Mexico City already has promoted 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.<sup>3</sup>

## **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.<sup>4</sup> 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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<sup>3</sup> See "Post-Election Mexico: Model of Political Politeness." *Reuters*, July 15, 1997.

<sup>4</sup> The Carter Center's four reports include: "Report of a Team Sent by the Council of Freely Elected Heads of Government to Witness the Observation of the Elections in Michoacan and Chihuahua, Mexico: First Report, July 13, 1992."; "Electoral Reform in Mexico: Second Report." (1993); "Elections in Mexico: Third Report." (1994); and "The August 21, 1994 Mexican National Elections: Fourth Report." (1994).

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 councilors (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 (*caciques*), 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 93-100 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)**

<b>Organization</b>	<b>PAN</b>	<b>PRI</b>	<b>PRD</b>
Consulta S.A.	27	42	26
Reforma	30	37	26
Covarrubias	32	38	24
CEO-UAG	33	33	23
<b>IFE (PREP)</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>26</b>

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

<b>Organization</b>	<b>PAN</b>	<b>PRI</b>	<b>PRD</b>
Consulta S.A.	0	3	0
Reforma	3	2	0
Covarrubias	5	1	2
CEO-UAG	6	6	3

Source: Consulta S.A.

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

<b>Organization</b>	<b>PAN</b>	<b>PRI</b>	<b>PRD</b>
Consulta S.A.	21	23	47
GEO	19	25	49
Berumen	17	27	45
UAM	15	20	45
Reforma	19	22	45
CEO	16	17	45
Alduncin and Co.	24	19	38
Ollin Consultants	22	33	38
<b>IFE (PREP)</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>47</b>

**Table II (B): DIFFERENCES BETWEEN JUNE OPINION SURVEYS AND IFE RESULTS**

**(Mexico City Governor's Race)**

<b>Organization</b>	<b>PAN</b>	<b>PRI</b>	<b>PRD</b>
Consulta S.A.	5	2	0
GEO	3	0	2
Berumen	1	2	2
UAM	1	5	2
Reforma	3	3	2
CEO	0	0	2
Alduncin and Co.	8	6	9
Ollin Consultants	6	8	9

**Source: Consulta S.A.**

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

<b>Organization</b>	<b>PAN</b>	<b>PRI</b>	<b>PRD</b>
Consulta S.A.	15	25	49
Berumen	16	26	48
Alianza Cívica	16	25	46
COPARMEX	16	25	46
CIRT	19	23	46
CEO	12	16	41
Presencia Ciudadana	15	24	47
<b>IFE (PREP)</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>47</b>

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

<b>Organization</b>	<b>PAN</b>	<b>PRI</b>	<b>PRD</b>
Consulta S.A.	1	1	2
Berumen	0	1	1
Alianza Cívica	0	0	1
COPARMEX	0	0	1
CIRT	3	2	1
CEO	4	9	6
Presencia Ciudadana	1	1	0

**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, Indemerc-Louis Harris, and the Chamber of Radio and Television Industry (CIRT) were also very accurate. The Indemerc-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 professionalization 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 roll. 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.<sup>5</sup> The complaints resulted 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 Mazo 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 proportionately has more resources than the opposition, although this problem has

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<sup>5</sup> 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 Mitovsky 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 Casteñeda and Mexico City assemblyman-elect Oscar Levin on July 8.*



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



*Dr. Robert Pastor discusses election results with José Woldenberg, president of the Federal Election Institute (IFE), on July 9.*

## KEY TERMS

AMDH	Mexican Academy for Human Rights
<i>caciques</i>	Local political bosses
<i>casillas</i>	Polling booths
CEO	Center for Opinion Studies
CEO-UAG	Center for Opinion Studies at the University of Guadalajara
CIRT	Chamber of Radio and Television Industry
<i>Confederación Patronal de la República Mexicana (COPARMEX)</i>	Management Confederation of the Mexican Republic
EU	European Union
IFE	Federal Election Institute
<i>padrón</i>	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
<i>Programa de Resultados Electorales Preliminares (PREP)</i>	Preliminary Electoral Results Program
PRI	Institutional Revolutionary Party
PT	Worker's Party
PVEM	Mexican Green Party
<i>Renapo</i>	National Population Registry
<i>Tribunal Electoral del Poder Judicial de la Federación (TRIFE)</i>	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 Cauhetémoc 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 Olmedo, 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 Peza and Magistrate Jesus Orozco Henríquez 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, PRI
- 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; Augustin Navarro, PAN International Relations; Ana Maria León, PAN National Relations
- 8:00 p.m. Delegation Dinner with Jorge Castañeda; Adolfo Aguilar, Senator for the Green Party; and Oscar Levin, Assemblyperson for State of Mexico, PRI

**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 Vaitheeswaran, *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**

Observer Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Time at Poll: (from \_\_:\_\_ to \_\_:\_\_)

State: \_\_\_\_\_

Municipality \_\_\_\_\_

Polling Site Number and Location: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Comments (major problems and/or irregularities, significant patterns, etc.):



**For Immediate Release**  
Tuesday, July 1, 1997

**Contact:** Carrie Harmon  
Public Information, Atlanta  
(404) 420-5107

### **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 turn, the Center was invited by national observer groups to witness elections in two Mexican states in 1992. 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.

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**Statement of Carter Center Study Mission to  
Elections in Mexico  
July 9, 1997**

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.

# Commentary

## PERSPECTIVE ON MEXICO

# The Fear Vote Gives Way to the Punishment Vote



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

By WAYNE A. CORNELIUS

**W**e've gone from 'patriotic fraud' to Walter Cronkite in less than 10 years!"

So said my Mexican friend on Sunday night after watching several hours of televised election returns. He was celebrating Mexico's remarkable passage from a political system in which blatant fraud in northern border-state elections in 1986 was publicly condoned by a senior leader of the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) (because "allowing" opposition parties to win governorships in such important states could compromise national sovereignty) to one in which government respect for voters' preferences is expected—indeed, demanded. This and other key elements of modern democratic politics are swiftly becoming routine in Mexico.

Recurrent economic crises (1976-77, 1982-89, 1994-96) were the most powerful catalyst for this revolution in citizen expectations. Most Mexicans suffered severe economic pain, directly attributable to government mismanagement of the national economy, during these two decades.

The 1988 presidential election brought a tidal wave of anti-government protest voting, but the government could contain the discontent and keep the PRI in power because it completely dominated the machinery of elections as well as the mass media. In the 1994 election, the PRI could ride the coattails of a still popular president, Carlos Salinas de Gortari, and take advantage of anxieties created by the Zapatista rebellion in Chiapas and a spate of high-profile political assassinations. PRI propaganda frightened voters with images of destabilizing violence and massive capital flight if an opposition party won at the national level.

In 1997, however, the *voto de miedo* (fear vote) was overwhelmed by the *voto de castigo* (punishment vote). Voters were furious at having been deceived twice by their government, first during the oil boom era of 1977-81 and then during the Salinas presidency (1988-94), periods when the government created an illusion of prosperity and boundless future economic gains.

Despite desperate attempts to distance itself from the now-deposed Salinas, who is almost universally blamed for the economic crisis that engulfed Mexico within

weeks after he left office, and the spectacular corruption scandals that emerged from his administration, the PRI in 1997 simply could not escape the taint of *Salinismo*. And President Ernesto Zedillo's frequent declarations that his policies had brought an end to the deep recession caused by a botched devaluation of the peso in December 1994 only added

insult to injury. "When did that happen?" Mexicans asked themselves, choosing to focus on the continuing slide in real incomes and the scarcity of jobs rather than the impressive recovery in macro-economic indicators that Zedillo has engineered.

Public confidence that a vote for some alternative to the PRI would be respected by the authorities was boosted significantly by the 1994 and 1996 reforms of the federal electoral law, which the government proposed and the PRI endorsed only

PRI authority was created and made responsible for organizing all phases of the electoral process, giving all parties access to the media, allocating public funds for campaigns, recruiting and training ordinary citizens to run the polling places, counting votes and certifying the results.

The level of security in the system is now high enough to motivate a majority of Mexicans to participate. The turnout last Sunday was exceptionally high for a midterm election, approaching 75% in Mexico City and 60% nationally. An exit poll conducted in Mexico City found that voters rated the electoral process at 8.3 on a 10-point scale.

Nevertheless, preelection surveys revealed that from 35% to 46% of the electorate still harbors doubts about the integrity of the process.

From this perspective, Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas' 22-percentage-point victory over his PRI opponent to head the gov-

his overwhelming lead in preelection polls. As one voter in the low-income Iztapalapa district put it: "I just have to hope that they'll respect my vote, because I'm going to vote for the one who never wins." He referred to Cárdenas, who is thought to have been cheated of victory in the 1988 presidential election and was declared to have run third in the 1994 presidential contest.

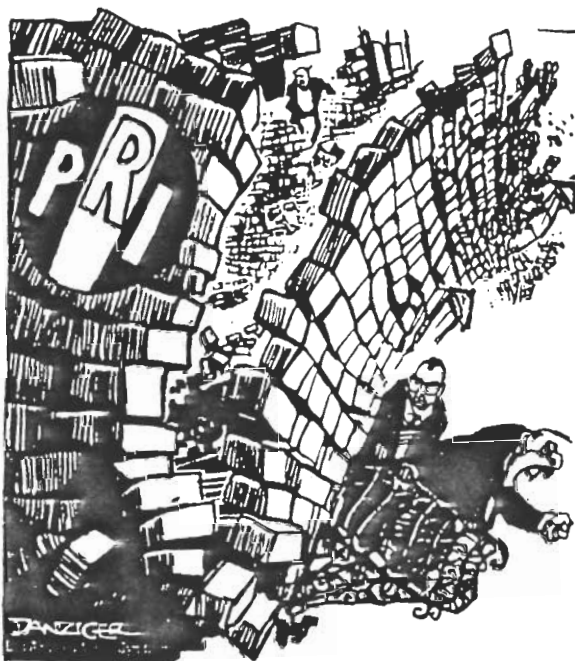
With the Zedillo government's recognition of Cárdenas' election and of the PRI's defeats in at least 112 congressional races throughout the country, the PRI's vulnerability has been fully exposed. Mexicans are looking forward to a titanic struggle for the presidency in 2000, between Cárdenas and Guanajuato Gov. Vicente Fox, the current frontrunner in the center-right National Action Party (PAN). Significantly, what the PRI will do in that election seems of little concern to most people.

Recent surveys of the national electorate have shown that the PRI's accumulated liabilities are dragging it down, even in states where it runs its best candidates. Forty-two percent of Mexicans in one national sample said they would refuse to vote for any PRI candidate this year, compared with only 11.5% who said they would not vote for a PAN candidate and 17.7% who would reject a candidate of Cárdenas' center-left Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD).

Like those Americans who voted in 1996 for a Republican Congress to keep a Democratic president in check, Mexicans who went to the polls on Sunday seemed well aware of the potential hazards and benefits of divided government. Many of them worried that Zedillo and other federal officials might not allow Cárdenas to do his job without hindrance. But they considered this a risk well worth taking. At minimum, they believe, the top-to-bottom housecleaning of the Mexico City government that Cárdenas has promised should reduce corruption and liberate resources in the city's \$4.6-billion budget for much needed services and crime fighting. And if an opposition-controlled federal Congress puts obstacles in the path of a president whose economic policies have been injurious and forces him to negotiate budget priorities, so much the better.

There is a rapidly spreading belief in Mexico that alternation in power among the three main parties is both desirable and achievable at all levels of governance. Most Mexicans seem to have concluded that it is time to get on with the business of modern democracy.

Wayne A. Cornelius is research director of UC San Diego's Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies. He observed Sunday's elections in Mexico City and the state of Tlaxcala.



SO! WE PERMIT YOU TO HAVE HONEST ELECTIONS... AND THIS IS HOW YOU REPAY US?

JEFF DANZIGER, New York

under intense pressure from citizens and the opposition parties. So many procedural safeguards were built into the conduct of elections through these reforms that the worst, old-style forms of vote fraud—stuffing ballot boxes and stealing them, "shaving" suspected opposition party sympathizers from the voter rolls, multiple voting by PRI supporters, falsifying vote tallies—became virtually impossible without provoking a public uproar and subjecting the perpetrators to heavy fines and jail sentences.

Most important, a new federal elections agency independent of government and

ernment of Mexico City should be a great confidence builder. Far more than the PRI's loss of an absolute majority in the lower house of Congress and the loss of its two-thirds majority in the Senate, the transfer of power to an opposition government in Mexico City after 68 years of presidentially appointed PRI mayors symbolizes to the average Mexican that the country is truly progressing toward a competitive, pluralistic political system.

At polling places in Mexico City, I encountered widespread skepticism among voters that federal authorities would "allow" Cárdenas to win, despite

# Mexican Voters' Anger Devastates Ruling Party

By John Ward Anderson  
Washington Post Foreign Service

MEXICO CITY, July 12.—The final results from Mexico's midterm elections still are being tallied, but the verdict is clear. Angered by rampant corruption and government policies that destroyed their savings and incomes, voters used new election laws to hand the ruling party its most punishing electoral defeats ever.

Nearly complete returns show that the Institutional Revolutionary Party, or PRI, lost its 68-year majority in the lower house of Congress by about 10 seats.

The party also lost about 18 seats and its two-thirds majority in the Senate; at least two of six state governors' races; three state legislatures; numerous municipal elections, and the biggest plum of all—the race for mayor of Mexico City, which was won massively by leftist Cuauhtemoc Cardenas of the Democratic Revolution Party (PRD).

"The restoration of the old system is impossible, there's no way back," said historian Enrique Krauze. "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 multi-party democracy 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 these elections, no one can ever again refer to the Institutional Revolutionary Party as the only party, the state party or an appendage of the government," President Ernesto Zedillo said as the extent of the PRI's thrashing unfolded.

Based on tallies from last Sunday's elections by the Federal Election Institute, the PRI will have 240 to 245 seats in the 500-member Chamber of Deputies when it convenes Dec. 5, short of the 251 it needs for an absolute majority. The center-right National Action Party, or PAN, and the PRD each will have about 120.

As in many legislatures, the smallest parties could end up with the largest role since neither the PRI nor a PAN-PRD alliance could muster a majority without the help of the Green Party, which is likely to have eight seats, or the Labor Party, with six. Exact seat counts depend upon the proportion 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 were fed up with the country's anemic economy and the PRI's history of corruption. Still, such stunning defeats for the once-invincible party would not have been possible, election observers said, without PRI-instigated electoral reforms that made these elections the cleanest, fairest and most competitive in recent times. About 58 percent of Mexico's 52 million eligible voters cast ballots.

Despite setbacks in virtually every corner of the country, returns showed that the PRI remains the dominant political force, with the only true nationwide machine. The elections reinforced the PAN's image as an urban, pro-business and regional party of the north—it received less than 5 percent of the vote in the southern state of Tabasco. The PRD firmed up its reputation as a party of the poor with stronger sup-

port in the center and south—it captured only 3 percent of the vote in the northern industrial state of Nuevo Leon.

While most observers hailed the campaign as Mexico's cleanest, charges of fraud, voter intimidation and election stealing continued to abound. The PRD accused the ruling party of massive fraud in the race for governor of southern Campeche—which the PRI won by a margin of about 8 percentage points. PAN officials said they would contest PRI gubernatorial victories in Colima and Sonora.

Despite the clear democratic advances, "to jump to the conclusion that Mexico has consolidated democracy in which all the parties are fully confident in the system is a bit of a leap," said Robert Pastor, director of the Latin American program at the Carter Center in Atlanta, which sent seven observers.

But most Mexican analysts agreed with historian Krauze that it would be difficult for the PRI to reestablish the sort of dominance it has enjoyed since 1929, particularly if—as expected—the opposition bands together in the next Congress to approve more wide-ranging changes to weaken the advantages the ruling party continues to have in election campaigns.

On economic matters, the ruling party and members of the PAN could easily find themselves voting together, as they have in the past, against the leftists to strengthen and expand

Mexico's free-market approach. The PRD in general has staked out positions against some privatizations, and Cardenas, the party leader, has said he favors renegotiating Mexico's foreign debt and parts of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

On the other hand, while PRI congressmen have voted as a bloc in the past, the party now is less monolithic, having divided over some issues. One of the most interesting scenarios has the hard-line "dinosaur" wing of the party joining with the leftist PRD on some issues against a coalition of pro-reform PRI technocrats and members of the center-right PAN.

# Vote revolutionizes Mexican democracy

By Susan Ferriss  
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

## Mexico City

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

After sweeping to a historic victory in national elections July 6, an opposition coalition from left to right is vowing to use its new muscle to investigate corruption in the Revolutionary Institutional Party, the PRI, and set a new political agenda that could touch everything from social spending to relations with the United States.

But the coalition is fragile: Although united in their rivalry with the PRI, the opposition parties are strange bedfellows, deeply divided by their own ideological differences.

"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 now," said Robert Pastor, who observed the Mexican

elections and is director of the Latin American Program of the Carter Center in Atlanta.

Mexico's left-of-center opposition, 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 introduction of greater imports of grain it says are hurting Mexican

farmers.

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

Along with the conservative opposition, the Party of National Action, known as the PAN, the PRD backs lowering the sales tax, transferring more money

from the federal government to states and offering Mexicans in the United States the right to vote.

The opposition appears most united in the drive to revive a congressional investigation into charges of alleged looting of public funds by former President Carlos Salinas de Gortari's brother,

Raui, who was a top PRI official and is now in jail, accused of masterminding the killing of a political rival and laundering money possibly tied to drug cartels.

The PRD, which claims that 500 of its activists have been murdered during the last decade because of their political beliefs, won a surprising number of seats in the Chamber of Deputies, the lower house of Congress. The party's leader, Cuauhtemoc Cardenas, was elected mayor of Mexico City, considered the second-most-powerful job in the country.

The ruling party won 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 like every Mexican president 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

displaying partisan tension that might make Mexican politics more unpredictable under a divided government.

The day after the election, officials from the PAN and the PRD were meeting behind closed doors to develop a mutual agenda. But leaders were also fighting publicly.

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

The PAN, which joined the PRI in advocating free-market reforms in the late 1980s, accuses the PRD of wanting to roll back Mexico to a nationalist, closed-market past. The PRD 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; it is a fractured party, divided over electoral reform and economic policies.

The PRI could splinter even more in the Congress, with some deputies forging alliances with the PAN and others the PRD. "This is like the New Testament," Navarro said. "Nothing has been written yet."

be forced to negotiate with Congress on virtually every piece of legislation.

The votes are still being counted, and a specific breakdown of seats in the chamber is unclear.

The PAN, which added two more governorships to the four it already holds, captured about 27 percent of the vote. It was disappointed because it may have won only one more seat than the PRD, which won about 26 percent.

The remaining 8 percent of the chamber will be divided among smaller liberal opposition parties.

The defeat was a clear sign that voters want to punish the PRI, which many blame for decades of inequality, corruption and a devastating peso crash in 1994 that took the shine off a euphoric rush into a free-market system.

"If the PRI doesn't renovate itself it will lose more elections," PRI Senate leader Esteban Moctezuma told foreign journalists last week.

Moctezuma is considered a reformist who wants to clean up the party. But he bristled at oppositionists to focus

rupture. "I'm 100 percent more honest than Cuauhtemoc Cardenas, and I'll say that to his face. And I'm from the PRI," Moctezuma said,

displaying partisan tension that might make Mexican politics more unpredictable under a divided government.

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# Viva Mexican Democracy

## — In Theory

By SAM DILLON

**D**URING the Mexican Revolution, violence spilled 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 contain Mexico's chaos. Ever since, Americans have wanted stability in Mexico and mostly they've had it: the Institutional Revolutionary Party, or PRI, has been in charge for seven decades.

PRI presidents made the important decisions, hand-picked governors, judges and legislators, and every six years anointed their own successors. Workers were kept submissive, and people — and corporations — with connections were able to get favors done.

And so the United States' initially positive reaction to the PRI's trouncing last week in a watershed national election may eventually develop into mixed feelings.

In rejecting the PRI, Mexico exchanged its long-time formula for stability — one-party rule — for a bold new democratic experiment. And while many of the

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

changes that may follow will seem healthy and thrilling to Americans, others may cause discomfort. For Mexico, after so long seeming immutable and quiet, now is likely to be not only turbulent but newly assertive.

The emboldened opposition parties victorious in the elections may press President Ernesto Zedillo to seek better terms from the United States in trade and other disputes. American corporations here may confront new labor unions that will defend Mexican workers more vigorously than the PRI-controlled federations. And anti-Americanism, largely absent from public discourse in recent years, may be heard. The price of Mexican democracy, for the United States, may be a more contentious neighbor.

"Mexico may become more confusing," said Robert A. Pastor, a director at the Carter Center in Atlanta who led a delegation of election observers to Mexico. "There'll be more voices and it may seem discordant, but Mexico has become more stable. Some people think stability requires a strong hand, but they're mistaken. Stability requires a framework for peaceful change. That's what Mexico got 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 Hogan, who helps Americans relocate their families to Mexico, watched her business stall in the months around every major election. Business was awful in 1988, when presidential balloting was widely considered fraudulent. "People feared some sort of revolution," she said. Americans also stayed away in 1994, another election year when Mexico seemed headed toward chaos. This spring her business again hit the skids as Americans grew nervous about Mexico.

But on Monday, the day after elections in which the PRI suffered its worst defeat ever, Ms. Hogan's phone rang crazily. "The voting was clean, the stock market shot up, the peso stayed strong," she said. "It was a pretty good picture." The State Department applauded. Several Wall Street firms recommended boosting investments here, and Ms. Hogan signed nine new clients.

Allowed for the first time to elect the mayor of Mexico City, voters chose Cuauhtemoc Cardenas Solorzano, the son of the Mexican president who nationalized the oil fields in 1938, who broke with the PRI a decade ago to form his own party. In the lower house of Congress, two opposition parties denied the PRI its perpetual majority and began preparing to transform what has been a rubber stamp chamber into an assertive new check on presidential prerogative.

### Economic Ties That Bind

America's craving for stability is understandable. Mexico has at least \$50 billion in American investments, \$156 billion a year in bilateral trade and a critical petroleum supply. Each year more than 10 million American tourists head south, and a million or more Mexicans head north, legally and illegally, to supply crucial labor for American fields and factories. The United States Embassy says some 350,000 Americans live in Mexico, many in retirement, many in professions or businesses.

John F. Smith, a Rhode Island native, has managed

his own head-hunting business for 25 years, recruiting executives to work for American or Mexican companies here. "I think the elections were stupendous, a real mark of Mexico's maturity," he said. "But I see years of uncertainty and turmoil, and I'm not sure all Americans will welcome the roiling waves of Mexican democracy. It could be unsettling to comfortable working arrangements, for business people and others who have liked the secure surroundings of a well-established order."

One arrangement that may come under attack is the agreements struck among the Government, large employers and PRI-controlled unions, which for years have kept salaries low. Driving voters last week was not only a desire for fresh leadership, but also anger over 30 months of austerity and a daily minimum wage that has plunged to \$3. Opposition lawmakers and independent unionists are likely to work together to improve conditions.

Along with labor unrest may come a dose of anti-American rhetoric, since many of the new lawmakers believe that PRI governments have been too solicitous of the United States. The newly independent Congress will also mount investigations into official corruption. To some Americans, it may even appear that Mexico is growing more corrupt as the country airs dirty laundry that has accumulated over years.

What Americans would like to see, but are unlikely to, are major new approaches to their main priorities in Mexico: slowing illegal immigration and narcotics trafficking. Both were non-issues in the Mexican election campaign.

"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 these things going to change as a result of an election?" asked Brian M. Jenkins, a deputy chairman of Kroll Associates, the security firm. "The answer is no. Those things are not going to change overnight."

# Gains by Opposition Confirmed in Mexico

By JULIA PRESTON

MEXICO CITY, July 14 — Official results have confirmed that opposition parties won a major share of power in national elections this month, bringing new pluralism to a country that had been a one-party state.

The official tallies, issued late Sunday, concluded a vote widely regarded as the cleanest in Mexico's modern history. The final count was very close to preliminary results released by the federal elections council in the hours after the polls closed on July 6.

The outcome was a vindication for the head of the elections council, José Woldenberg, who had pledged to run an election that would give Mexicans new confidence.

The official results showed that the Institutional Revolutionary Party, or PRI, which governed Mexico virtually unchallenged for nearly seven decades, lost its majority in the lower house of Congress. But the party will still have the largest delegations in both houses of the legislature.

According to estimates based on the official figures, the PRI will have 239 seats in the 500-seat lower house.

In a surprise result, the left-of-center Party of the Democratic Revolution will have the second-largest delegation, with 125 seats. The conservative National Action Party, which has been Mexico's second political force, is expected to have 122 seats, and smaller parties will divide the rest.

The PRI will continue to dominate the Senate, but it no longer has the power to approve any significant legislation without forging alliances with opposition lawmakers.

The Party of the Democratic Revolution, known by its Spanish initials as the P.R.D., was buoyed by the

decisive victory in the Mexico City mayoral race of its founding leader, Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, who took 47 percent of the vote in the first election for the post in decades. His party also won 38 of 66 seats in the capital's city council, giving him a free hand to carry out his policies.

Mr. Cárdenas is facing a long transition, since he does not take office until Dec. 5. After an amicable meeting with Mr. Cárdenas late today,

President Ernesto Zedillo announced that he would cede some of his powers by allowing the Mayor-elect to name a new police chief and District Attorney for the capital, which is in the grip of a crime epidemic. By law Mr. Zedillo is still entitled to make those appointments.

The elections council will not give its final word on the distribution of seats in Congress until an elections court has ruled on contested returns in some districts, which it must do by Aug. 23. But officials said today that the tally was unlikely to change substantially. The new legislators take office in late August.

The only contest that produced widespread fraud allegations was in the Gulf state of Campeche. In the race for Governor there, Layda Sansores, who broke with the PRI last year to join the P.R.D., was defeated by the PRI candidate, Antonio González Kuri, who won 48 percent of the vote to her 41 percent, according to official tallies.

Mrs. Sansores led a march of an estimated 20,000 sympathizers in the state capital, on Sunday and has pledged to wage a campaign of civil resistance.

The opposition parties also organized some protests charging fraud in the central state of Colima, where final results showed a narrow victory for the PRI candidate for Governor. The protests are not expected to affect the outcome of that contest.

In the southern state of Chiapas, more than one-fifth of the precincts never opened after sympathizers of the Zapatista rebels burned polling stations and attacked voters across much of the state. The elections council has not decided whether to call a new election in the state.

## KEEPING TRACK

### Mexican Elections

Official results for the lower house of Congress with the percentage of popular vote.

	NUMBER OF SEATS	
	OLD	NEW
39% Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI)	298	239
26 Party of the Democratic Revolution (P.R.D.)	65	125
27 National Action Party (PAN)	119	122
4 Green Ecological Party (P.V.E.M.)	—	8
3 Workers Party (P.T.)	7	6
2 Independents	14	0

Source: Mexican Congress; Federal Elections Institute

The New York Times

The New York Times July 15, 1997

# AUTOLÍTOS

# El gran paso de México

ELASTICACIONES DE JULIO DE 1997

ROBERT A. PASTOR y RUTH MELKONIAN-HOOVER

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

**L**as elecciones del 6 de julio en México representan un avance significativo en el camino hacia la democratización. Los partidos políticos más importantes quedaron ampliamente satisfechos con el proceso y, con algunas excepciones, aceptaron los resultados. La política se ha vuelto más competitiva y las instituciones se han vuelto más autónomas. Estos cambios ampliarán y profundizarán la promesa de la democracia en México y también tendrán un impacto positivo en las relaciones México-Estados Unidos.

La democracia es un trabajo en progreso; en ningún lado es perfecta. La gente de una nación debe luchar continuamente para asegurar que el gobierno dé respuesta a sus necesidades humanas. Por eso, la prueba elemental de una democracia consiste en que la gente crea que sus votos cuentan y que los partidos creen que el proceso electoral es justo, y acepten sus resultados. La comunidad internacional puede debilitar o reforzar el proceso democrático, pero únicamente la gente de una nación particular puede afianzar sus derechos democráticos.

En el Centro Carter, de Atlanta, hemos trabajado durante más de una década para reforzar el proceso democrático en diez países de América Latina y el Caribe, en el Medio Oriente, China y África. El Centro Carter, también, envió una delegación para observar las elecciones presidenciales llevadas a cabo en México en agosto de 1994, y hemos continuado monitoreando el progreso de las reformas electorales.

Durante la Conference on the Hemispheric Agenda, organizada por el Centro Carter el 28 de abril de 1997, el presidente Ernesto Zedillo envió un mensaje invitando al Centro Carter a estudiar y evaluar el proceso electoral en México. Con base en esta invitación y en las que formularon los partidos más importantes, el Centro Carter envió a una pequeña delegación a estudiar la puesta en marcha de las reformas electorales durante las elecciones del 6 de julio. Nuestro equipo visitó casillas en tres estados y en el Distrito Federal. También pasamos un tiempo considerable realizando encuentros con líderes de los partidos políticos, autoridades del IFE y del Tribunal Electoral, líderes de organizaciones no gubernamentales que tuvieron una presencia activa durante el proceso electoral y con miembros del gobierno y del Congreso.

Llegamos a varias conclusiones acerca del proceso y de las implicaciones de sus resultados. Primero, advertimos un gran entusiasmo por parte del pueblo mexicano, que se dio cuenta de que sus votos eran secretos y de que contaban. En segundo lugar, el Instituto Federal Electoral (IFE) realizó un buen trabajo durante la conducción de las elecciones, demostrando su auto-

nomía, lo que le dio credibilidad al proceso. Los partidos políticos más importantes se mostraron satisfechos con su

trabajo, y Sergio Aguayo nos dijo: "Ahora tenemos una autoridad electoral en la que confiamos". Esta declaración es particularmente significativa si tomamos en cuenta el papel crítico que el doctor Aguayo ha mantenido a través de los años. El llegó a esa conclusión únicamente después de observar que el IFE respondió seria y efectivamente a las quejas legítimas acerca del proceso electoral. En tercer lugar, mientras que el proceso electoral a nivel nacional está trabajando bien, aún hay problemas en algunas áreas o estados, entre los que se encuentran Chiapas, Campeche, Colima y Sonora, sin embargo, los partidos decidieron dar solución a sus quejas mediante los canales legales a su alcance. También hubo alguna inquietud debido a que la publicación de los resultados preliminares fue suspendida el lunes en la tarde, cuando se había contabilizado únicamente el resultado de 87% de las casillas. Las autoridades del IFE nos explicaron las razones por las que detuvieron el conteo después de eso, pero necesitaban presentar al público una explicación más completa.

Los resultados de las elecciones en México pueden ser interpretados como un voto por el cambio, así como por razones a corto plazo relacionadas con la crisis económica, y por el deseo de un sistema democrático más fuerte a largo plazo. Un resultado será que por primera vez México tendrá un Congreso más activo e independiente y que la presión para transferir poder a los estados y al Distrito Federal será más fuerte.

Las implicaciones de estos cambios para las relaciones México-Estados Unidos son muy importantes. Históricamente, Estados Unidos ha temido que la inestabilidad en México no podría ser contenida en la frontera. Esto fue verdad durante la Revolución de 1910 y aún lo es ahora. La inestabilidad significa que el gobierno tiene una menor capacidad para desarrollar su economía y detener el embarque ilegal de drogas. También significa un aumento en el número de inmigrantes ilegales, problema que es una creciente fuente de preocupación al sudoeste de Estados Unidos. Está dentro del interés de Estados Unidos que México tenga una economía en crecimiento y un sistema político que se acomode por sí mismo a las necesidades del cambio pacífico. Algunas personas dentro de EU prefieren la existencia de un partido dominante en lugar de una democracia, pero nosotros creemos que constituyen una minoría. La mayoría de los estadounidenses quiere que los mexicanos gocen de los mismos derechos que los demás, y creen que la democracia es el sistema más estable en el mundo, debido a que permite un continuo y pacífico cambio político. (S)

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