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Changed or Short-Changed?
Argentina’s Presidential Election 2003

Florencia Jubany

Argentines will vote for a new president on April 27, 2003 in a climate marked by unreliable polls, highly fragmented traditional parties and a divided electorate. Expectations of change are low and apathy is high. Argentines failed to convert their burst of citizen engagement, embodied in the loud protests of the cacerolazos and piqueteros of 2001-2002, into a real change when new leaders did not emerge. Most candidates in this year’s election come from the same old and discredited political class as in the past. Only one contender has never held high office: anti-corruption crusader congresswoman Elisa “Lilita” Carrió. Practically, any one of the five main candidates - with support ranging between 10% and 20% - could become the next president of Argentina. With voter intentions atomized and split along class lines, there is consensus among political analysts that a second round is almost inevitable - an unprecedented event in Argentina.

Just days before the elections, the key question appears to be: who will face front-runner Carlos Menem in the runoff?

Carlos Menem (72), former president of Argentina (1989-1999), benefits from nostalgia for the period of “convertibility”, when the Argentine peso was worth a dollar by law and Argentines felt rich. A dark cloud hangs over him now, however, as his name is associated with serious scandals involving arms smuggling and a cover-up of the bombings of the Israeli embassy and a Jewish community centre in the early 1990s. Menem has spent time under house arrest and investigations continue to probe his past both within Argentina and overseas. His support typically comes from the Peronist poor and from a small Menemist business clique that prospered during his tenure.

While leading opinion polls, Menem is also the most unpopular politician - with a 57% rejection rate – and is widely perceived by those who do not support him as one of the country’s most corrupt leaders. Nevertheless, opinion polls show that between 40% to 60% of Argentines believe that he will become the next president of Argentina, even though only 18% would consider voting for him. Partly because of what analysts are calling the “power factor” – the fact that Menem is a former president and is perceived as being highly influential – it is widely assumed that Menem will be one of two names to make it to the second round.

Second in the polls is Ricardo López Murphy (51), the single surprise of this electoral race, who rose from the bottom of the polls to become a serious contender for
the second round in less than a month. López Murphy’s support is concentrated in large urban centres among the middle and upper middle classes, and small business people and professionals in rural and provincial Argentina. Not exactly an outsider, having held two cabinet posts in the government of Fernando de la Rúa (1999-2001), López Murphy has spent most of his career in academia and as a consultant for the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), United Nations Development Program (UNDP), World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). He is running as the candidate of reform who promises to tackle corruption, waste and inefficiency in government. López Murphy is probably the candidate whose election would be best received abroad.

Also a Peronist, Néstor Kirchner (53) is currently governor of the oil-rich province of Santa Cruz in Patagonia. He is the preferred candidate of President Eduardo Duhalde in the power struggle between Menem and Duhalde over control of the Peronist Party and of the country. Those voting for him include part of the left-of-centre middle class, that part of the Peronist vote that responds to the Duhalde “political machine” in the poor suburbs of Buenos Aires, and anti-Menem Peronists who believe that Menem sold Peronism out to big business. There is no reason to believe that a Kirchner government would be any more willing to cut spending on items such as public sector salaries, pensions and subsidy programs than his patron Duhalde has been. A Kirchner victory would thus be unlikely to persuade foreign investors and creditors that Argentina has turned a new page.

Fourth is Peronist and president-for-a-week Adolfo Rodríguez Saá (53), governor of the poor province of San Luis. He is best remembered for announcing Argentina’s debt default during his short term in office in December 2001. He appeals to nationalists and traditional Peronists who see state interventionism as an act of nationalist assertiveness.

Finally, Elisa Carrió (46), formerly with the left-wing of the Radical Party (UCR), made her name denouncing corruption scandals, including alleged money laundering at Citibank which led to a US Senate inquiry. Much like Kirchner, she is appealing to the progressive middle class as well as what might be called the “anyone-but-Menem” movement, including breakaway Peronists who fled the party during the Menem era in favour of the short-lived Alliance party of the mid-90s.
The true challenge, of course, is not getting elected, but governing Argentina.

The next president will face a series of difficult tests and, judging by past experience, can expect little sympathy or understanding from an impatient electorate and a bellicose Congress. Leading Argentina back to the road of economic growth and social progress will require the new president to:

1. Manage the grave social situation, including crime, hunger, unemployment, and the “piqueteros”;
2. Negotiate support for a new legislative agenda in a divided Congress;
3. Check the huge political power of provincial governors;
4. Address multiple and competing demands from unions and business, including overhaul of the financial system, renegotiation of contracts with privatized firms, and reinstatement of the rule of law / property rights; and
5. Negotiate debt restructuring with the International Monetary Fund.

The Argentine political scene on the eve of the 2003 election reveals elements of both continuity and change.

Peronism as a symbol has survived the debacles of recent years and still retains its traditional hold on many of the nation’s voters. But the movement has fractured into political currents of left, right, and old-style nationalism, which oppose each other in the persons of Kirchner, Menem and Rodríguez Saá. It is this fragmentation of the Peronist vote that ensures a second round.

One great unknown is what would happen in the event of a runoff between Menem and López Murphy. The expectation is that many Peronist candidates and voters would rally behind Menem. But anti-Menem feeling is high even among Peronists. Poll simulations suggest that this vote would combine with non-Peronist votes to give López Murphy a wide victory in the event of a run-off against Menem. The same might well happen in the case of a runoff between Menem and Kirchner, with non-Peronists holding their noses and voting for the lesser of two evils.

While most candidates inspire feelings of weary cynicism or indifference, Carlos Menem typically inspires much stronger reactions and is burdened with a very high rejection rate. A solid core of support undeniably makes him one of the strongest contenders in the first round. But Menem is unlikely to win a plurality of 40%, which might allow him to avoid a second round. And as a uniquely controversial figure, he becomes very vulnerable in any second round, as it is difficult to imagine a scenario in which a majority of Argentine voters would cast their ballots for Carlos Menem.

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In Oviedo’s Shadow: Elections in Paraguay

Paul Haslam

On April 27, Paraguayans go to the polls to choose a new president, congress, governors and municipal councillors to replace the embattled government of Luis González Macchi. González Macchi was appointed to the presidency in March 1999 after former-president Raúl Cubas fled the country following accusations that he, and exiled strongman General Lino Oviedo, had been involved in the murder of then Vice-President Luis María Argaña. Since then, his government has been mired in accusations of corruption and incompetence, unable to implement desperately needed economic reforms, and has barely survived several failed attempts to impeach the president (see FOCAL POINT, February 2003).

Paraguay entered the electoral campaign with a lame-duck president and the country in a deep economic crisis. With the ruling party ahead in the polls and General Lino Oviedo continuing to exert his influence from abroad, the outcome of the elections may bring little change to Paraguay.

Continuity or Change?

There are four front-running presidential candidates to replace González Macchi: Nicanor Duarte Frutos, Asociación Nacional Republicana (ANR – Colorado Party); Pedro Fadul, Movimiento Patria Querida (MPQ); Julio César Franco, Partido Liberal Radical Auténtico (PLRA); and Guillermo Sánchez Guffanti, Unión de Ciudadanos Éticos (UNACE).

The run-up to the April elections has been characterized by only small ideological differences between the front-running candidates. All candidates have campaigned against corruption and indiscriminate privatization and recognized the need for increased tax collection and economic reform. The key differences are found along two axis: continuity versus change of government; and pro-Oviedo versus anti-Oviedo.

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The continuity option is represented by Nicanor Duarte Frutos, leader of the ruling Colorado Party (ANR). Duarte Frutos leads the oficialista faction of the ANR and successfully worked both to prevent the impeachment of Luis González Macchi in February of this year, and prevent the presidency (or vice-presidency) from falling into the hands of anyone likely to allow General Lino Oviedo to participate in the April electoral contest. Nonetheless, Nicanor Duarte Frutos has presented himself as a change within the Colorado party and has successfully avoided being blamed for saving González Macchi from impeachment.

The Colorado party since the dictatorship of Alfredo Stroessner (1954-1989) blurred the lines between party and state, has been the undisputed dominant party in Paraguayan politics. Under Stroessner, party membership was a pre-condition for public employment and this employment was the key source of party patronage and political support. Although the democratic era has weakened these mechanisms, the continuity of the Colorado party in power after the return to democracy in 1989 suggests that this institutional support remains important to the electoral fortunes of the party. Local reports indicated that the Colorados continue to use state resources to fund their campaigns, and that members of the armed forces have been asked by the military leadership to vote for the Colorado list (ABC Color Digital, 02/04/03, 21/04/03).

The Oviedo Question

Three front-running alternatives to the one-party hegemony of the Colorados are splitting the “change” vote. These parties can be divided according to their relationship to Oviedo.

Despite his escape to and current residence in Brazil, General Lino Oviedo is the puppet-master of Paraguay politics. He has been banned from

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**Paraguay Election Facts**

**Electoral Timetable:**
- April 27, 2003
- Inauguration of new government - August 15, 2003

**What is at Stake?**
- President and vice-president
- 45 senators
- 80 deputies
- 17 regional governors
- 191 municipal councillors

**Leading Candidates:**
- Nicanor Duarte Frutos, Asociación Nacional Republicana/Colorado (ANR)
- Pedro Fadul, Movimiento Patria Querida (MPQ)
- Julio César Franco, Partido Liberal Radical Auténtico (PLRA)
- Guillermo Sánchez Guffanti, Unión de Cuidados Éticos (UNACE)

**Rules of the Game:**
President and vice-president elected by simple majority (plurality), there is no second round runoff (Article 244 of Electoral Code). Total eligible to vote: 2,405,107, voting with electronic machines: 45.83%.

**Voting Intentions for President**

Source: Diario Última Hora, 17/04/2003; www.tsje.gov.py
running in the April elections due to his conviction in a military court to a 10-year term for leading a military uprising. He is also suspected of involvement in the murder of former Vice-President Luis María Argaña in 1999. Nonetheless Oviedo is the single most popular political figure in Paraguay and his influence on local politics is daunting. A poll in August 2002 revealed him to be the most popular politician in the country and more than 50% of those surveyed indicated they would vote for the candidate supported by Oviedo (Financial Times, 30/08/02). He is also alleged to have been behind a series of anti-government protests in July-September of last year. Support for Oviedo cuts across existing parties. Oviedo supporters within both the opposition PLRA and the ruling Colorado party supported the impeachment of Luis González Macchi in the hope that a new president would lift the ban on Oviedo’s participation in the elections.

In this respect, his support in the April elections is seen as crucial for the outcome. The two pro-Oviedo parties – his new personal party vehicle, UNACE led by Guillermo Sánchez Guffanti, and the other traditional party, the PLRA led by Julio César Franco (the former Vice-President) – have presented plans to give Oviedo amnesty and allow him to return to Paraguay. They have also unsuccessfully tried to negotiate a joint ticket as a way of amassing the Oviedo vote behind them. In the wake of this failure, Oviedo has recommended to his followers that they vote for the Sánchez Guffanti ticket, and has recently implemented a sophisticated telemarketing campaign in which Oviedo’s recorded voice exhorts his followers to vote for UNACE’s “list #10” (ABC Color Digital, 15/04/03, La Nación 17/04/03).

The surprise of the elections has been the success of Pedro Fadul’s Movimiento Patria Querida (MPQ), a party that has displaced the PLRA for second place in the polls. Fadul is a wealthy businessman and owner of one of Paraguay’s largest conglomerates. His party has campaigned on a pro-market and anti-corruption platform and advanced a policy of regional decentralization and participatory budgeting. Most interestingly, Patria Querida, has been able to position itself as both the party of change (displacing the PLRA on this issue) and has been silent on the issue of granting amnesty to Lino Oviedo. Fadul has also been careful to position his party as not anti-COLORADO (in a country where the Colorados are by far the dominant party), but rather as an alternative to the oficialista faction of the Colorado leadership represented by Duarte Frutos and González Macchi. Polls reveal that the majority of undecided voters identify themselves as Colorados or independents.

What the Polls Say

Recent polls have put the Colorado candidate Nicanor Duarte Frutos in the lead nationally by 10% points over his closest rival, Pedro Fadul (MPQ), with both the PLRA and UNACE far behind. The Colorados are strongest in rural areas and among poorer voters, while the MPQ shows a slight advantage over the Colorados in the Asunción area.

Reportedly due to pressure from the ruling Colorado Party, the official Electoral Tribunal (TSJE), which oversees the elections, reduced the electorate’s access to electronic voting machines from from 53% to 46% of the population with only two weeks to go before the election (ABC Color Digital, 12/04/03; www.tsje.gov.py). This decision, in combination with distribution of the vote, favours the ruling Colorado party. Most electronic voting stations will be located in rural areas where the Colorados can use traditional patronage politics to get out the vote. In Asunción, where the Colorados are trailing the Fadul’s MPQ, the absence of electronic voting stations opens the possibility that ballot box manipulation could be used to secure a victory for the ruling party.

In light of the degree of popular support attributed to General Lino Oviedo, the low support of around 7% for the official UNACE candidate seems particularly surprising. In addition, polling results from Asunción reveal that the vote of self-identified Oviedo supporters is split between the UNACE (67%) and PLRA (22%) candidates. In fact Oviedistas are more fragmented and have a higher percentage of undecided (11%) voters than any other party (ABC Color Digital, 21/04/03). These facts may indicate that Oviedo is not mobilizing the vote behind UNACE as expected. Nonetheless, Oviedo appears to have the influence to sway the election – what he will do with it remains unknown.

Scenarios for the Future

The Paraguayan president is elected by simple majority and there is no second-round runoff. If polls are correct, it seems likely that Nicanor Duarte Frutos and the Colorado party will win the presidency and a plurality in the Congress where seats in the Congress are allocated according to proportional representation. The political machine available to the Colorados and the fragmentation of the “change” vote between three major parties makes this outcome even more probable. The effect of Lino Oviedo on the elections is still unclear and whether he pulls out the stops to mobilize the vote for UNACE or makes a deal with Duarte Frutos or another leading party may yet influence the outcome.

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Why Has Portillo Lost Support in Guatemala?

Claudia Paguaga

Although the official campaign for the November 9, 2003 presidential elections has not yet begun in Guatemala, the deterioration of the political climate has undermined public faith in elected officials and may reduce the likelihood that the ruling Frente Republicano Guatemalteco (FRG) will be re-elected. The government’s failure to adequately address pressing social and economic concerns, its inability to manage the issue of paramilitary compensation and address human rights abuses, combined with Guatemala’s recent decertification by the US, have contributed to a decline in public support for President Portillo (FOCAL POINT, January 2003).

The failure of President Portillo’s government to satisfy important social actors, ranging from human rights organizations to former paramilitaries, has cost him support among the population. In March, for instance, former members of the community-based paramilitary groups, known as Patrullas de Autodefensa Civil (PAC), protested against the government’s failure to deliver on its promise to compensate them for their “services” during the civil war (1960-1996). In response, President Portillo unveiled a compensation package of $US 672 per person to “pay off” approximately 250,000 former paramilitaries. However, this decision was criticized by the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Commission in Guatemala (MINUGUA) and other international human rights groups, which accuse these paramilitaries of committing atrocities during the civil war. In spite of this criticism, President Portillo began distributing payments to former members of the PAC in order to gain their support.

Also fuelling discontent is the government’s failure to redress the country’s human rights situation, which remains alarming. According to a report prepared by the Inter-American Human Rights Commission (CIDH), the deterioration of human rights in Guatemala is revealed by corruption, impunity, civil right abuses, organized crime, kidnappings of activist leaders, attacks and intimidations targeted at judges and human rights organizations, all of which have weakened the rule of law. The CIDH report also points out that the judiciary is inefficient, that illegal and clandestine security organizations have increased, that the army has exceeded its jurisdiction and that the 1996 peace accords, particularly the sections regarding indigenous people, women and the rights of children, have yet to be implemented. The CIDH concludes in this report that the government of Alfonso Portillo is taking steps backwards and is alienating the international community as a result (Prensa Libre, 31/03/03).

On the external front, the Portillo government also faces a number of problems. Not only has the IMF refused to extend a standby credit agreement that expired at the end of March, claiming that the government had not demonstrated enough commitment to reducing the fiscal deficit, but Guatemala was also decertified by the United States in January 2003 for its failure to combat the illicit drug trade, which could also potentially deprive Guatemala of assistance. The US annually “certifies” the cooperation and counter-narcotics efforts of countries considered by the US to be major producers or transit points for illicit drugs. Decertification entails the loss of US financial and development assistance. Since then, as part of

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Costa Rica

On April 4, 2003, the Costa Rican Constitutional Court voted in a 5-2 ruling to reform the law that prohibited former presidents from seeking re-election. Former presidents will now be able to serve a second-term after having been out of office for eight years. The court ruled that the banning of re-election violated a basic human right to seek elected office (Latin News Online 07/04/03).

Re-election is a controversial issue in Latin America where the electoral process is far from flawless. Critics argue that re-election can provide incentives for presidents to centralize too much power in their own hands. It is also argued that the quality of governance declines in the second term as illustrated by the cases of Alberto Fujimori in Peru and Carlos Menem in Argentina. Supporters of re-election, on the other hand, argue that it can reinforce democracy by ensuring that presidents remain accountable to citizens in the next election (Nueva Mayoría 12/02/03).

In 2000, former president Oscar Arias lobbied for the reform of the 1969 constitutional articles banning re-election. He has also expressed an interest in running for the presidency again. Although former president Arias is by far the most popular politician in Costa Rica and is well-known internationally for having won the 1987 Nobel Peace Prize, it remains to be seen whether he will lead the incumbent opposition party, the Partido Liberación Nacional (PLN), in the next presidential elections.
an intensive campaign aimed at recovering the confidence of the US, the Portillo government has strengthened its efforts towards halting the traffic of drugs with the seizure of $US 14.4 million in cash from the residence of Otto Roberto Herrera Garcia, alleged leader of a cartel of drug-traffickers operating throughout Central America, and the arrest of two Colombians, also alleged to be involved in this cartel (La Nación, 04/04/03).

The lack of domestic support for the current government is reflected in public opinion polls. According to a study published by the local newspaper Prensa Libre, 69 percent of Guatemalans, including first-time voters, do not have confidence in their politicians. Although opposition party leader Oscar Berger of the Partido Avanzada Nacional (PAN) is favoured to win the Presidential election, the same study also highlighted that 38 percent of the electorate think that potential candidates are not proposing new solutions to the problems that the country is facing and 54 percent believe that the next elections will not solve the most pressing issues in Guatemalan society today (Terra, 11/03/03).

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Credibility of Canada’s Cuba Policy at Stake as Repression Grows

Cristina Warren

Representing the most severe crackdown in Cuba for nearly a decade, beginning on March 18, 2003, one day before the war with Iraq started, the Cuban government arrested scores of dissidents, accusing them of working with U.S. diplomats to undermine the Cuban government. Advocating for political change through non-violent means, these individuals included political and human rights activists, independent journalists, and directors of independent libraries. Seventy-five dissidents were sentenced to prison terms ranging between 6 and 28 years in summary trials that took place between April 3 to April 9 and denied defendants the basic rights of due process.

These individuals were prosecuted under the Law for the Protection of Cuban National Independence and the Economy (Ley de Protección de la Independencia Nacional y la Economía de Cuba, Ley 88), which took effect in March 1999, and the Law Reaffirming Cuban Dignity and Sovereignty (Ley de Reafirmación de la Dignidad y Soberanía Cubanas), which took effect in December 1996. The Cuban government justified both laws, which further restricted civil and political rights in Cuba, as a means of protecting national sovereignty in response to the Helms-Burton Law, a U.S. law that hardened the U.S. trade embargo against Cuba.

The arrests and sentences have spurred condemnations from a growing list of countries including Canada, the European Union, Spain and the Vatican, human rights groups and non-governmental organizations such as Amnesty International, the Canadian human rights organization, Rights and Democracy, the Carter Center, the U.S.-based Cuba Policy Foundation (an organization that promotes U.S.-Cuba relations and at which, the entire Board of Directors resigned in protest), and even France’s Communist Party.

Canadian Policy on Cuba

- July 16, 1997, the “Group of Four” dissidents are arrested after sending the document “La Patria es de Todos” to the Central Committee of the Cuban Communist Party (CCP).
- April 27-28, 1998, Prime Minister Jean Chrétien visits Cuba and asks Fidel Castro to free the dissidents.
- March 1, 1999, the “Group of Four” are sentenced to jail (3-5 years).
- March 15, 1999, Chrétien announces that Canada would be reviewing the range of its bilateral activities. Canada suspends high-level contacts and ends attempts to reintegrate Cuba into the Western hemispheric community.
- November 2002, Canada resumes cabinet-level visits with Cuba following the release of the last of the four dissidents.
- March 18, 2003, Cuban government announces a crackdown on dissidents.
- April 3-9, 2003, 75 dissidents sentenced to prison terms between 6 and 28 years.
- April 7, 2003, Canadian Foreign Minister Bill Graham summons Cuban Ambassador to deliver a letter of protest to Havana.
In a further indication of growing repression on the island, Cuban authorities executed three men for hijacking a Cuban ferry on April 2. The incident, the third hijacking in two weeks in Cuba, ended without bloodshed, after several days' standoff between Cuban security forces and the hijackers. Appeals to Cuba's Supreme Court and the Council of State were dealt with in a cursory manner. The three men were shot less than a week after their trial began, ending a three-year _de facto_ moratorium on executions.

In response to the sentencing of the dissidents, Canadian Foreign Affairs Minister Bill Graham summoned the Cuban Ambassador to his office to express "extreme concern" over the crackdown. He presented the Ambassador with a letter to Cuban Foreign Minister Felipe Pérez Roque stating that "the Canadian government is extremely concerned about this potential curtailment of human rights and freedom of expression in Cuba, and is deeply disturbed by the severity of the sentences."

While Canada was among the first countries to protest to the Cuban Government, and Canada fully supported a resolution critical of Cuba at the UN Human Rights Commission in Geneva this month, Canada's response has been insufficient to date, given the gravity of current actions by the Cuban Government and the potential for further deterioration of the situation. Canada's response to recent events is in marked contrast to Prime Minister Chrétien's high-profile stance in March 1999 when he ordered a review of relations in response to the jailing of four prominent dissidents for 3 to 5 years. The dissidents had criticized Cuba's Communist Party for not adequately addressing the island's economic problems. That foreign policy review resulted in the suspension of ministerial-level contacts that lasted until the November 2002 visit to Cuba by Secretary of State Denis Paradis.

Fidel Castro's response to the condemnation by the international community has been to blame the United States and its Havana-based representative, James Cason, which have been providing assistance to a number of Cuba's emerging independent civil society groups by supplying information materials, hosting meetings and providing access to the internet. It is true that Cason's actions have been provocative in diplomatic terms, since such direct contacts with dissident communities are normally carried out by lower-level diplomatic personnel. Nevertheless, the reaction of the Cuban Government was certainly excessive.

So what should Canada do? Canada must clearly convey the message to the Cuban Government that its recent action against Cuba's dissident community is unacceptable. Foreign Affairs Minister Bill Graham should continue to press his Cuban counterpart in public and in private. Canada should also continue to raise the issue in multilateral and regional fora such as the Organization of American States. Ministerial visits should also be put on hold. Perhaps this policy could best be pursued through a serious strategy of pulling together a coalition of like-minded countries from Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean in order to coordinate their
strategies towards Cuba and put additional pressure on Havana to, at a minimum, engage in dialogue with its international partners about the legitimacy of peaceful dissent on the island.

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FOCAL's Research Forum on Cuba fosters informed discussion on the immediate and long-term challenges facing Cuba and Canadian policy towards the island.

http://www.cubasource.org

For more information go to:

FOCAL Spotlight on Cuba: Increasing Repression
An electronic bulletin designed to raise awareness and clarify developments on key topics related to Cuba as they unfold. This issue contains: a chronology of events, a list of dissidents arrested, the text of the laws being applied by the Cuban government, and official statements by the Cuban government, Cuban civil society and by the international community on the arrests and executions.

FOCAL’s list of Cuban independent organizations
http://www.cubasource.org/civil_society/main.htm
A list of over 470 independent civil society organizations that includes information (where available) such as: name, date founded, founding members, leadership, institutional objectives, publications, political initiatives, membership size, international affiliations, domestic affiliations, address, telephone, fax, e-mail and website address. The list is currently available in Spanish only but will soon be available in English.

Haiti

The Organisation of American States (OAS) is running out of time to ensure free and fair municipal and legislative elections in Haiti this year. The OAS views these elections as a possible exit from the political deadlock that has existed in Haiti since May 2000.

The most recent OAS/Caribbean Community (Caricom) mission to Port-au-Prince on March 19-20 issued a 10-day deadline within which time the government of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide must establish a credible Provisional Electoral Council. This recent action demonstrates that the OAS is losing faith in Aristide’s capacity to fulfil the conditions listed in Resolution 822, which required his Lavalas government to protect civil and political liberties, reform the police force and disarm Lavalas political factions.

However, Aristide responded to the ultimatum in a way that will not restore his credibility with the OAS or reassure the opposition. He appointed one of his longstanding supporters as the new national police chief, a security institution in desperate need of reform. This clear conflict of interest underlines that the issue of disarming Lavalas partisans is unlikely to be addressed.

With Aristide and the Lavalas party's refusal to take concrete steps to improve the climate for the upcoming elections, the OAS has called a Special Session to be held at the end of April to discuss what is increasingly seen as a failure of the current administration to comply with Resolution 822. The OAS has thus found itself in the same position as it was in one year ago – this time with more evidence that Aristide lacks the political will to guarantee democracy in Haiti.

Editorial

Summity: Can Canada Reach the Next Peak without Oxygen?

There is something deeply ironic about the conduct of Canadian foreign policy in the Americas, or to be more precise, toward Latin America and the Caribbean. The recent announcement that a Special Summit of the Americas for all 34 heads of state and heads of government will take place this October in Mexico signals an important victory for a Canadian diplomatic initiative. The Canadian Government has been rightly concerned that the momentum to address major hemispheric challenges on poverty, equity and democratic governance generated by the April 2001 Summit in Quebec City has been subsiding and that this is happening at a time of institutional decay and economic hardship in Latin America and in the Caribbean. A combined effort by Canada and others has wrung agreement to press on with the Summit from an initially reluctant President Luiz
Inácio (Lula) da Silva of Brazil. The price extracted by Lula was to downplay free trade and focus on governance and poverty. Canada is not unhappy with this trade-off because it permits a return to the basic priorities set by the Quebec Summit.

However, the Prime Minister, the Finance Minister and Treasury Board do not yet seem to understand that money spent on Summits promotes Canadian initiatives and profile but that the profile fades without adequate backup for implementation. The modest replenishment for CIDA in this year’s budget helps, but implementation of key Canadian Summit objectives is not possible if the central executing department – Foreign Affairs - continues to suffer debilitating under-funding. The robust advocacy to reverse the declining effectiveness and credibility of Canada’s armed forces applies in even greater measure to the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade. Without a minimally resourced Foreign Affairs Department we lose our competitive edge in all of the so-called three “pillars” of our foreign policy:

- trade; peace; and the projection of our values and identity. Cabinet eventually listened to the rising chorus of protest about military expenditures, but judging by the last Budget, has absorbed little about the relevance of Foreign Affairs to our national goals – and about what works and what doesn’t work in reaching for these goals.

Obviously Canada is not a great power with great power resources. Yet, we have not shed our G8 pretensions. To run with the G8 crowd we have tried to maintain a global profile with a miniature budget. The results are detrimental to Canadian interests. Why not sharpen our priorities in the Americas where we have the potential to make a difference that we clearly don’t have in most other parts of the world? A Canadian ambassador in Latin America and the Caribbean has the chance to be among the six or seven most influential ambassadors to his or her country of accreditation. With rare exceptions that chance does not exist in the rest of the world.

For more than a decade we have been a major player in inter-American affairs. Canada, along with a handful of other states in the OAS (Organization of American States) was the architect of policies designed to defend democracy in a region where the high walls of sovereignty had long sheltered illegal and dictatorial governments from censure. Supporting a desire for change within Latin America, we have helped to consolidate a remarkable political transition. Twenty-five years ago most of the region was controlled by military regimes. By the early nineties all but Cuba could be painted in democratic colours.

The countries of Latin America and the Caribbean have become political as well as geographical sister nations – and these relationships have been cemented by intense interaction at the OAS. This is a more vigorous institution than its somnambulant image suggests. No regional organization outside Western Europe has struck so boldly for the values of democratic governance. The OAS, with the active participation of Canada, has created a fabric of rules and jurisprudence that has helped to insulate member countries from the perils and temptations of military coups, and has changed the pattern of governance. Over the past 12

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### Peru

The Peruvian Congress voted to re-establish a bicameral legislature on April 3, 2003, as part of an ongoing process of constitutional reform (La República, 04/04/03). The new legislature will consist of a Chamber of Deputies, with one hundred and fifty representatives elected for a five-year term and an elected Senate of fifty representatives.

There was broad consensus within Congress on the need to reinstate a bicameral legislature, considered to be an important step towards enhancing accountability and popular confidence in national political institutions and contributing to the overall re-democratization of Peru in the post-Fujimori era. Other reforms implemented as part of this process included political decentralization and the expansion of the National Truth and Reconciliation Commission, charged with investigating human rights abuses between 1980-2000.

Peru’s bicameral system was dismantled in 1992 following then-president Alberto Fujimori’s auto-golpe (self-coup). During this period the Congress was dissolved and the Constitution was suspended, and a new Constitution was created in a bid to centralize power in the executive and allow for Presidential re-election.

Although a bicameral legislature can potentially create a stronger system of checks and balances, and promote representation and debate, it also risks exacerbating the problems of governance and political deadlock that currently confront President Toledo. Persistent distrust of politicians and historically weak political institutions combined with low levels of public support for the government may reduce the democratizing effects anticipated from these legislative reforms.
years there have been no successful military coups.

However, the institutional foundations of democracy are now in decay. The democratic colours are fading. Some, as in Haiti and Paraguay were never bright. More recently and dramatically, Venezuela, the Latin American country with the second-best record of unbroken constitutional democracy shows signs of coming off the democratic rails. Colombia remains mired in civil war. Argentines are dazed and deflated by the free fall of their economy. Simmering grievances of indigenous peoples in Bolivia have sputtered into violence. Expectations in Peru that the government of President Toledo would rebuild confidence in institutions shattered by Fujimori have stalled. Citizens are losing faith in political parties and judicial systems are losing credibility. Political entrenchment by elites, corruption, resistance to effective taxation, and inadequate expenditures on health and education combine to lower confidence in the democratic process. In many urban settings where crime is soaring, tolerance for the abuse of human rights is seen as an acceptable trade-off for more police action. These are all issues for the next Summit. Many of the countries involved are powerful trading partners of Canada and their economic and political well-being is a factor in our prosperity. Mexico is poised to become our fourth most important global economic partner. There are many reasons why Canada should provide appropriate help to meet these challenges, not least, our own self-interest.

Traditionally, this region is more the United States’ back yard than ours. Setting aside some problems and disquiet about the new muscular unilateralism, American influence over the past two decades has been generally positive - pressing for health, judicial and education reform, democracy and the empowering of local government. But distractions in other parts of the world leave Latin America and the Caribbean as low priorities for President Bush and Secretary of State Colin Powell - another reason for an assertive and better-resourced Canadian involvement.

Minister Graham’s review of foreign policy provides an opportunity to refocus our priorities and to recognize that this is a region where leverage and mutual benefits are within our grasp. The review should be looking to increase the support provided to the Inter-American system. Particularly, we should have resources to prepare for the Mexico Summit, we should be strengthening the OAS Office of Summit Follow-Up, earmarking more resources for the Unit for the Promotion of Democracy (which was a Canadian invention), and reinforcing the efforts of the OAS to address the special challenges of small economies. This opportunity will be wasted if an already under-nourished ministry is required to spend more time tightening its belt than building on its strengths.

John W. Graham, Chair of the Board, The Canadian Foundation for the Americas (FOCAL)
the process of redefining the inter-American security architecture. The attacks have accelerated a process of re-examination that began to emerge within the inter-American system at the conclusion of what is broadly referred to as the Cold War. This serious and sustained dialogue on hemispheric security and military related issues was driven, in the main, by the Summit of the Americas process and was conducted in a manner that examines both fundamental principles of security as well as institutional responsibilities and their capabilities. In attempting to capture this process, the paper takes a look at the positions of Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Mexico and the United States, as the policies of these countries will have an important impact on the special conference on hemispheric security that the Organization of American States will hold in May 2003.

Available online at: 
http://www.focal.ca/images/pdf/hsecurity03.pdf

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