

Date: July 3, 2000  
To: Instituto Federal Electoral  
From: Daniel Banfill Monroe Wilson  
Re: Report as an International Observer of the July 2<sup>nd</sup> Elections

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In accordance with the IFE's invitation to participate as an International Observer, I am pleased to submit this report of my activities during the election period.

In so doing, I would first like to express my appreciation to the IFE for the opportunity to participate as an observer, and to express my admiration for the enormous effort undertaken by the IFE to ensure a transparent, free, and fair electoral process and vote.

My participation as an International Observer was greatly facilitated by the assistance of the Partido Revolucionario Institucional and the Fundación Nuevo Milenio AC. Prior to Election Day, I participated in a series of events organized by the PRI for international observers in Mexico City. On July 2<sup>nd</sup>, I joined a group of Mexican electoral observers organized by the Fundación Nuevo Milenio in Ixmiquilpan, Hidalgo.

I am grateful to the PRI and to Amb. Sandra Fuentes for their hospitality and the high quality of the events that they organized as orientation for the electoral process. I am also grateful to the Fundación and its Project Coordinator, Virgilio Gómez Morales, for their assistance and the tremendous effort they undertook to monitor the elections throughout the Republic. The success of the IFE's project clearly depends on the commitment of the political parties to open elections, the parties' vigilance of the casillas on election day, and the dedication of the thousands of Mexicans who participated as electoral observers during the day.

On Election Day, I visited seven different voting sections in the Municipality of Ixmiquilpan, Second District, State of Hidalgo. I observed the progress of the elections in the towns of Mandhó, Los Remedios, Orizabita, El Durazno, and Granaditas, as well as the barrios of Progreso and Media Luna in Ixmiquilpan.<sup>1</sup> I did not observe the closing of the casillas.

I made my visits in the company of representatives of the Fundación Nuevo Milenio, which will be making its own comprehensive report on its electoral observations throughout Mexico. This report does not speak for the Fundación, but only for myself. I am extremely grateful for the hospitality shown me by the members of the Fundación in Ixmiquilpan, especially the local coordinator, José Guadalupe Rangel Chavarria.

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<sup>1</sup> The sections visited included: 0549, 0553, 0588, 0584, 0580, 0575 and the section in El Durazno (number not recorded).

My observations are the following:

- The voting was orderly and tranquil.
- The casillas opened on time (or at least by 8:30 am), and all had the full complement of officials and full complement of materials.
- The secrecy of individual votes was respected in every instance. Family members accompanied several elderly voters into the voting booth, but this seemed appropriate under the circumstances.
- Overall, the appropriate voting procedures appeared to have been followed.
- No one was allowed to vote who did not have a *credencial* and who did not appear in the *lista nominal*.
- Every polling place had representatives of at least two parties present, and in most cases all three parties. In a couple of instances, local party representatives seemed to be more familiar with procedures than the casilla officials, and made suggestions to the officials. However, their suggestions were appropriate, and casilla officials remained the final authority.
- There was no evidence of electioneering or voter intimidation or pressure. In Los Remedios, a truck showing party propaganda was parked close to the voting place (probably by accident). The casilla president ordered it moved out of sight, and it was promptly moved.
- As observers, both myself and the representatives of the Fundación were well received. The casilla officials and the party representatives gave us full cooperation in answering our questions, allowing us to inspect the *actas*, and in observing the voting.

The few defects in procedure that I observed were relatively minor, and I do not believe they had an effect on the overall fairness of the voting:

- In several casillas, the officials did not realize that they were supposed to separate the *talon* from the ballots.
- In one casilla we visited during the day, the officials and the party representatives had not signed the *actas* for opening the casilla. However, everything appeared to be in order.
- None of the casillas had sealed the ballot boxes with tape; I do not believe that they realized that this was supposed to be done. However, the boxes appeared to be adequately secured even without tape.

The only repeated complaint that I heard during the day was about voters who had *credenciales* but who did not appear on the *lista nominal*. I would estimate that this could have accounted for 2 to 5% of the voters who came to vote. These voters were told that they had to go to a *casilla especial* in order to cast their ballots. Given the difficulties in travel in this region, this would seem to represent a significant hardship for these citizens.

I hope these comments are helpful and will assist the IFE in its final evaluation of the results of the July 2<sup>nd</sup> election and in your planning for future elections.

It has indeed been an honor to be able to participate in such an historic election – both in its results, and in the magnificent manner in which they were carried out.

Yours sincerely,

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