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Seven Latin American Nations Prepare Resolution On Ensuring Free & Competitive Elections In Paraguay

by John Neagle

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On Feb. 15, the AFP reported that the "Rio Group" nations (Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela) are preparing a resolution to be discussed at the Organization of American States on ensuring that the May 1 elections in Paraguay are fair and competitive. Representatives of the Rio Group say their intent is that Paraguay not live to experience "Stroessnerism without Stroessner." The resolution will be submitted Feb. 20 to the OAS political council. Some Latin American leaders agree with Paraguayan opposition parties who insist that they need more time to organize themselves to compete against deposed Gen. Alfredo Stroessner's Colorado Party, in power for over three decades. Upon returning from a visit in Asuncion on Feb. 15, former US Ambassador to Paraguay, Robert White, said that in his opinion, Domingo Laino, leader of the Liberal Authentic Party, is "marching solidly toward leadership of that country, if free elections take place." Costa Rica's ambassador to the OAS, Guillermo Villabos Arce, requested a special council session to vote on support for the installation of a permanent democratic regime in Paraguay. Paraguay's ambassador to the OAS, Juan Alberto Yanes, asked that the debate be postponed until Feb. 21. He said the new rulers in Asuncion wished to send a high-level official to participate. The Rio Group accepted Yanes' request.

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