4-21-1993

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Mexico City Mayor Proposes Direct Elections For Federal District Legislative Assembly

by Carlos Navarro
Category/Department: General
Published: Wednesday, April 21, 1993

On April 16, Mexico City Mayor Manuel Camacho Solis proposed direct elections for members of the local city council (Asamblea de Representantes del Distrito Federal, ARDF), to begin in 1997. He also proposed an expansion of legislative powers for the ARDF, effective in 1994. Speaking at a session of the ARDF, Camacho proposed that the country's president select the mayor from the ranks of whichever party receives the most votes in the ARDF elections, rather than only from the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), which has been the most recent practice. Despite Camacho's new support for self-government in Mexico City, members of opposition parties immediately criticized the plan as "confusing, absurd and inadequate." The opponents specifically objected to Camacho's proposal to leave the appointment of the mayor in the hands of the president, rather than allowing direct elections. The opponents, led by members of the Democratic Revolution Party (PRD), also reiterated their support for statehood for the Federal District, a proposal that voters overwhelmingly supported in a non-binding March 21 plebiscite (for more details see SourceMex, 03/24/93). Under the proposal for expanded powers for the ARDF, Camacho suggested giving the legislative body the power to decide on taxation and budget matters, local administration, and on elections, as long as none of these interfere with the federal government's operations. Opponents, however, told Camacho they would like the ARDF to be transformed into a legislature with full independence from the federal government. The ARDF, which was created in 1988, has merely served to rubber-stamp the federal government's decisions for the capital. (Sources: Notimex, 04/16/93, Spanish news service EFE, 04/17/93)

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