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## **Gen. Rodriguez Elected President Of Paraguay: Summary**

*by John Neagle*

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After mid-day on May 1, Radio Nanduti began broadcasting opposition politicians' reports of numerous "irregularities" observed in voting throughout the country. According to local and foreign journalists, voter turnout appeared to be very high. Most of the complaints concerned the insufficient ballots or the absence of representatives of certain parties at polling places, and the inefficiency of the indelible ink. According to many individuals interviewed by Notimex, the ink was easily removed with water or polish remover. Moreover, they said, many people refused to have their right index finger moistened with ink, as prescribed. In a statement broadcast on radio, Domingo Laino, presidential candidate of the Authentic Radical Liberal Party (PLRA) claimed that irregularities were widespread. If the "tendency" continued, said Laino, he would withdraw from the election. At 3 p.m. local time, Laino met with Febrerista Party candidate, Fernando Vera, to discuss the observed Uruguayan Roberto Asiain, an observer representing the Latin American Association for Human Rights, told Notimex that the reported irregularities "were expected, and it is not known if they are significant." Paraguayan officials were sensitive to charges of fraud. They admitted, for instance, that at least one quarter of the more than 2 million voters registered were fictitious. In order to avoid multiple-voting, after casting their ballots, all voters were to have their right index fingers stamped with purple indelible ink, and representatives of opposition parties and foreign observers were to be stationed at the 11,000 polling booths checking, among other things, for the indelible ink on any would-be double-voter. Early May 2, unofficial results of the vote count by the Colorado Party from a total of 1,048,299 ballots gave Rodriguez 778,470. On Monday evening, Colorado party president Juan Ramon Chavez announced the victory of Gen. Rodriguez with 889,933 votes. The unofficial count showed 313,785 votes for Laino. Unidentified foreign observers and diplomats quoted by AP said that while irregularities occurred, the balloting was reasonably fair and that Rodriguez had clearly won. By mid-morning, the official count showed Rodriguez with 131,075, or 75.24%, of the 174,201 votes counted for president; and the Colorado Party with 114,247 or 62.21% of the 172,560 for congressional seats. By law the Colorados, as the winning party in the congressional elections, would receive 24 of the 36 Senate seats and 48 of the 72 seats in the Chamber of Deputies. (Basic data from Notimex, AFP, 05/01/89; AP, DPA, Notimex, 05/02/89)

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