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## **PRI Candidate Zedillo Leads Public Opinion Polls**

*by LADB Staff*

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Three separate public opinion polls conducted during April indicated that the governing Institutional Revolutionary Party's (PRI) presidential candidate Ernesto Zedillo is ahead of his two main challengers in election popularity, although the margin of his lead varied significantly among the three surveys. Zedillo was appointed as PRI candidate in late March, replacing Luis Donaldo Colosio, who was assassinated in Tijuana on March 23.

A poll commissioned by the National Radio and Television Chamber (Camara Nacional de Radio y Television) and conducted by the Indemerc-Louis Harris firm indicated that 58% of voters support Zedillo's candidacy, followed by 22% for Cuauhtemoc Cardenas of the Democratic Revolution Party (PRD), and 15% for Diego Fernandez de Cevallos of the National Action Party (PAN).

Indemerc director Vicente Licuona and Chamber president Javier Perez de Anda said the survey was carried out between April 7-11 in 12 cities among nearly 6,000 registered voters. The pollsters said their data indicated that the assassination of Colosio did not result in increased sympathies for the ruling party, which has been in power since it was founded in 1929. In fact, they said, support for the PRI had fallen slightly since a survey conducted several weeks before the assassination.

Meanwhile, a survey conducted by the private polling organization Gabinete de Estudios de Opinion (GEO) showed Zedillo with support of 63% of voters. The poll, which took into account responses from 1,100 voters in 17 states, gave Cardenas 16%, and Fernandez de Cevallos 12% support. Poll results were published in the government-owned newspaper El Nacional. A third poll, commissioned by Este Pais magazine and conducted by the MORI de Mexico firm, showed Zedillo with a much smaller lead, with 34% of voter support, compared with 24% for Cardenas and 16% for Fernandez de Cevallos.

As has traditionally been the case in Mexico, the poll results have generated significant debate and controversy. Among other complaints, all three firms have been criticized for methodological weaknesses in their surveys. For example, Indemerc and GEO were widely criticized for not factoring undecided voters into calculations, while analysts say the sample used in the MORI poll was too small.

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