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Colombia: President Agrees To Dissolve Congress, Hold Early Elections

by Barbara Khol

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On June 8, President Cesar Gaviria agreed to dissolve Congress and hold early elections, giving in to pressure from new political groups trying to break the stranglehold of the Liberal and Conservative parties. Under an accord signed by Gaviria and political leaders, the bi-cameral Congress will be officially dissolved before July 2 by an ad hoc panel that is currently rewriting the constitution. Elections for a new legislature will be held Oct. 6, two years ahead of schedule. The new Congress will meet for the first time Feb. 2, 1992. Until then, a panel of 18 people, to be elected by the constitutional committee, will act as a temporary legislature. The accord must yet be approved by the 76-member constitutional committee. According to the interior ministry, new congressional elections would help in reaching a peace accord between the government and two rebel organizations. (Basic data from AP, AFP, 06/06/91)

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