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Uruguay: Leftist Coalition Gaining Strength

by Erika Harding

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According to Consultores Equipos, in July the public approval rating for the Broad Front (Frente Amplio) coalition of social democrats and former guerrillas stood at 26%, compared to 17% for President Luis Alberto Lacalle's Blanco Party, and 25% for the Colorado Party. The July results marked the first time the Front has taken the lead in political popularity polls. The Front came in third in the 1989 presidential election. Coalition politician Tabare Vazquez was elected mayor of Montevideo, home to over half of all Uruguayans. According to former Blanco party senator and 1989 presidential candidate Carlos Pereyra, a Broad Front victory in the 1994 national elections "has ceased being a utopia and become...something possible." Political analysts say the growing popularity of the left is largely due to economic decline for over 20 years. Since 1965, GDP growth averaged 1.2% per annum, and consumer price inflation, 57%. Unemployment is currently at 9%. (Source: Associated Press, 10/16/91)

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