

POLITICAL FACT SHEET FOR THE NATIONS OF
LATIN AMERICA

CONGRESSIONAL
RESEARCH
SERVICE
LIBRARY
OF CONGRESS

VIRGINIA M. HAGEN
Analyst in Latin American Affairs
Foreign Affairs Division

March 30, 1972

POLITICAL FACT SHEET FOR THE NATIONS OF LATIN AMERICA

COUNTRY	HEAD OF GOVERNMENT	MEANS OF ATTAINING OFFICE	MAJOR LEGAL POLITICAL PARTIES & MOVEMENTS*	POPULATION [Millions/Mid-1971 Estimates]	AREA Sq. Mi.
Argentina	Gen. Alejandro Augustín Lanusse	Named head of government (as Army Commander-in-Chief) on March 26, 1971, following ouster of junta chief Gen. Roberto Marcelo Levingston (in power since June 1970) by Argentina's military commanders.	Movimiento Justicialista [Peronist movement] Unión Cívica Radical -- (UCR) <u>1</u> /	24.7	1,072,157
Barbados	Prime Minister Errol Walton Barrow	Took office on Nov. 30, 1966, following national elections and the achievement of independence from Great Britain. Re-elected Sept. 9, 1971 for a 5-year term (subject to called elections).	Democratic Labour Party -- (DLP) Barbados Labour Party -- (BLP) Barbados National Party -- (BNP)	0.3	166

* In each country listing, the first political party named is the party of the head of government, except in the cases of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Ecuador, and Peru, where the heads of government profess no party ties.

COUNTRY	HEAD OF GOVERNMENT	MEANS OF ATTAINING OFFICE	MAJOR LEGAL POLITICAL PARTIES & MOVEMENTS	POPULATION [Millions/Mid-1971 Estimates]	AREA Sq. Mi.
Bolivia	Col. Hugo Banzer Suarez	Assumed office on Aug. 22, 1971, following military coup which deposed Gen. Juan José Torres Gonzalez (in power since Oct. 1970).	Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario -- (MNR) Falange Socialista Boliviana -- (FSB) <u>2/</u>	4.8	424,160
Brazil	Gen. Emilio Garrastazú Médici	Took office on Oct. 30, 1969, for a 5-year term after being selected by the military and elected by the National Congress to succeed the late president, Marshal Arthur da Costa e Silva.	Aliança Renovadora Nacional -- (ARENA) Movimento Democrático Brasileiro -- (MDB)	95.7	3,286,470
Chile	Pres. Salvador Allende Gossens	Took office on Nov. 3, 1970, for a 6-year term following national elections. <u>3/</u>	Unidad Popular -- (UP), [leftist coalition composed of]: Partido Socialista -- (PS) (Allende) Partido Radical -- (PR) Partido Izquierda Radical -- (PIR) Movimiento de Izquierda Cristiano -- (MIC) Partido Comunista -- (PC) Partido Demócrata Cristiano -- (PDC) Partido Nacional -- (PN)	10.0	292,255

COUNTRY	HEAD OF GOVERNMENT	MEANS OF ATTAINING OFFICE	MAJOR LEGAL POLITICAL PARTIES & MOVEMENTS	POPULATION [Millions/Mid-1971 Estimates]	AREA Sq. Mi.
Colombia	Pres. Misael Pastrana Borrero	Took office on Aug. 7 1970, for a 4-year term following national elections.	Partido Conservador -- (PC) Partido Liberal -- (PL) Alianza Nacional Popular -- (ANAPO)	22.1	439,735
Costa Rica	Pres. José Figueres Ferrer	Took office on May 8, 1970, for a 4-year term following national elections.	Partido Liberación Nacional -- (PLN) Unificación Nacional -- (UN) Partido Republicano Nacional -- (PRN) Partido Renovación Democrática -- (PRD) Partido Nacional Independiente -- (PNI)	1.9	19,575
Cuba	Prime Minister [& 1st Sec. of Communist Party] Maj. Fidel Castro Ruz	Assumed office on Feb. 16, 1959, following the Jan. 1, 1959 victory of the revolution against Gen. Fulgencio Batista.	Partido Comunista Cubano -- (PCC)	8.6	44,220

COUNTRY	HEAD OF GOVERNMENT	MEANS OF ATTAINING OFFICE	MAJOR LEGAL POLITICAL PARTIES & MOVEMENTS	POPULATION [Millions/Mid-1971 Estimates]	AREA Sq. Mi.
Dominican Republic	Pres. Joaquín Balaguer	Took office on July 1, 1966, following national elections. Re-elected to second 4-year term beginning Aug. 16, 1970.	Partido Reformista -- (PR) Partido Revolucionario Dominicano -- (PRD) Movimiento de Integración Democrática -- (MIDA) Partido Quisqueyano Demócrata -- (PQD)	4.4	18,815
Ecuador	Gen. Guillermo Rodríguez Lara	Assumed office as head of armed forces junta on Feb. 16, 1972, after military coup deposed elected Pres. José María Velasco Ibarra (in office since Sept. 1968).	Partido Conservador -- (PC) Partido Liberal Radical Ecuatoriano -- (PLRE) Concentración de Fuerzas Populares -- (CFP)	6.3	109,483
El Salvador	Col. Arturo Armando Molina, president-elect	Elected for 5-year term on Feb. 20, 1972. Will replace outgoing president Col. Fidel Sánchez Hernández. Inauguration - July 1, 1972.	Partido de Conciliación Nacional -- (PCN) Partido Demócrata Cristiano -- (PDC) Partido Popular Salvadoreño -- (PPS) Frente Unido Democrático Independiente -- (FUDI)	3.6	8,260

COUNTRY	HEAD OF GOVERNMENT	MEANS OF ATTAINING OFFICE	MAJOR LEGAL POLITICAL PARTIES & MOVEMENTS	POPULATION [Millions/Mid-1971 Estimates]	AREA Sq. Mi.
Guatemala	Col. Carlos Manuel Araña Osorio	Took office on July 1, 1970, for a 4-year term following national elections.	Movimiento de Liberación Nacional -- (MLN) Partido Institucional Democrático -- (PID) Partido Revolucionario -- (PR) Democracia Cristiana Guatemalteca -- (DCG)	5.3	42,042
Guyana	Prime Minister Lindon Forbes Sampson Burnham	Designated by the Gov.-Gen. as Premier of British Guiana; took office Dec. 14, 1964; continued in office following Guyana's independence from Great Britain (May 1966); reelected on Dec. 16, 1968, for a 5-year term (subject to called elections).	People's National Congress -- (PNC) People's Progressive Party -- (PPP) United Force -- (UF)	0.8	83,000
Haiti	Pres. Jean-Claude Duvalier	Assumed office as Pres.-for-Life on April 22, 1971, following the death of his father, Pres. François Duvalier.	No organized political parties.	5.4	10,714

COUNTRY	HEAD OF GOVERNMENT	MEANS OF ATTAINING OFFICE	MAJOR LEGAL POLITICAL PARTIES & MOVEMENTS	POPULATION [Millions/Mid-1971 Estimates]	AREA Sq. Mi.
Honduras	Pres. Ramón Ernesto Cruz	Took office on June 6, 1971, for a 6-year term following national elections.	Partido Nacional -- (PN) Partido Liberal -- (PL)	2.8	43,275
Jamaica	Prime Minister Michael Manley	Took office on March 2, 1972, for a 5-year term (subject to called elections) following national parliamentary elections on Feb. 29 called by incumbent Prime Minister Hugh L. Shearer.	People's National Party -- (PNP) Jamaica Labour Party -- (JLP)	2.0	4,230
Mexico	Pres. Luis Echeverría Alvarez	Took office on Dec. 1, 1970, for a 6-year term following national elections.	Partido Revolucionario Institucional -- (PRI) Partido Accion Nacional -- (PAN)	52.5	761,600
Nicaragua	Gen. Anastasio Somoza Debayle	Took office on May 1, 1967, for a 5-year term following national elections. Term expires May 1, 1972. <u>4/</u>	Partido Liberal Nacionalista -- (PLN) Partido Conservador Tradicional de Nicaragua -- (PCT)	2.1	50,195

COUNTRY	HEAD OF GOVERNMENT	MEANS OF ATTAINING OFFICE	MAJOR LEGAL POLITICAL PARTIES & MOVEMENTS	POPULATION [Millions/Mid-1971 Estimates]	AREA Sq. Mi.
Panama	Brig. Gen. Omar Torrijos Herrera [Commander-in-Chief of the National Guard & "Leader of the Revolution"]	Assumed command of the National Guard (& actual leadership of Panamanian Government) on Oct. 13, 1968, after leading military coup which deposed elected Pres. Arnulfo Arias (Oct. 1968).	All political activity, including the functioning of the National Assembly, ceased when the Torrijos Government came to power in Oct. 1968. A new single party, the Movimiento Novo Panameño, is in the process of selecting several candidates in each Panamanian locality to run in a general election scheduled by Torrijos for Aug. 6, 1972. 500 representatives will be chosen and will perform the tasks of deciding on constitutional reform, selecting a new president, and possibly converting themselves into a legislative assembly after their express functions are performed.	1.5	29,210

COUNTRY	HEAD OF GOVERNMENT	MEANS OF ATTAINING OFFICE	MAJOR LEGAL POLITICAL PARTIES & MOVEMENTS	POPULATION [Millions/Mid-1971 Estimates]	AREA Sq. Mi.
Paraguay	Gen. Alfredo Stroessner	Assumed power by coup d'état on May 5, 1954. First inaugurated as president, Aug. 15, 1954, following national elections. Reelected 1958, 1963, 1968 - inaugurated Aug. 15, 1968, for a 5-year term.	Asociación Nacional Republicana/Partido Colorado -- (Colorados) Partido Liberal Radical -- (PLR)	2.5	157,047
Peru	Gen. Juan Velasco Alvarado	Assumed office on Oct. 4, 1968, following military coup which deposed elected Pres. Fernando Belaúnde Terry (in office since July 1963).	Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana -- (APRA) <u>5</u> / Acción Popular -- (AP) Partido Popular Cristiano -- (PPC) Partido Demócrata Cristiano -- (PDC) Partido Comunista Peruviano -- (PCP)	14.0	496,222
Trinidad and Tobago	Prime Minister Eric E. Williams	Designated colonial Chief Minister, 1956; designated Premier, 1959; became Prime Minister following national elections at time of independence from Great Britain, Aug. 31, 1962. Re-elected 1966, May 24, 1971, for a 5-year term (subject to called elections). <u>6</u> /	People's National Movement -- (PNM) Democratic Labour Party -- (DLP) Action Committee of Dedicated Citizens -- (ACDC) Democratic Liberation Party -- (DLibP) United National Independent Party -- (UNIP) Tapia House Movement -- (TAPIA) National Joint Action Committee -- (NJAC)	1.1	1,980

COUNTRY	HEAD OF GOVERNMENT	MEANS OF ATTAINING OFFICE	MAJOR LEGAL POLITICAL PARTIES & MOVEMENTS	POPULATION [Millions/Mid-1971 Estimates]	AREA Sq. Mi.
Uruguay	Pres. Juan María Bordaberry	Took office on March 1, 1972, for a 5-year term following national elections.	Partido Colorado -- (PC) Partido Nacional (Blanco) -- (PN) Frente Amplio [leftist coalition composed of: Partido Demócrata Cristiano -- (PDC) Partido Comunista -- (PCU) Partido Socialista -- (PS) and several smaller leftist-oriented parties, supported by the National Liberation Front, Uruguay's Tupamaro guerrilla organization.]	2.9	72,170
Venezuela	Pres. Rafael Caldera Rodríguez	Took office on March 11, 1969, for a 5-year term following national elections.	Comité Organizador del Partido Electoral Independiente -- (COPEI) Acción Democrática -- (AD) Movimiento Electoral del Pueblo -- (MEP) Unión Republicana Democrática -- (URD)	11.1	352,140

FOOTNOTES:

- 1/ Argentina: The National Congress was dissolved under the Onganía Government following the June 1966 military coup. General elections have been scheduled for March 1973.
- 2/ Bolivia: Under the Torres Government (preceding Banzer), all political party activity was, in effect, suspended. The Banzer Government has permitted activity by the two major parties. The National Congress was suspended by the Ovando Government (preceding Torres) and has not met since September 1969.
- 3/ Chile: In Chile's September 1970 presidential elections, Allende received a plurality rather than a majority of the popular vote (36 percent). He was confirmed as President by a majority vote of the National Congress (Oct. 24) in a runoff with the Nationalist Party (PN) candidate, in accordance with Chilean electoral procedure.
- 4/ Nicaragua: Gen. Somoza's elected term of office is due to expire at the end of April 1972. Rather than the scheduling of national elections in early 1972, an agreement was worked out between Somoza's Liberal Party and the opposition Conservative Party whereby elections were held on February 6, 1972, for a constitutional assembly, to convene on April 15, 1972. Its function is to revise the 1950 Constitution to effect a major modernization of Nicaragua's electoral mechanism, with the stated purpose of ensuring universally recognized free and open national elections in 1974. The constituent assembly will also choose a board of three presidents (composed of two members of Somoza's Liberal Party and one from the Conservative Party) which will take office on May 1, 1972.
- In view of these plans, the nation's Congress dissolved itself in August 1971. After the constituent assembly promulgates the new constitution, it will divide into two houses and function as the legislative arm of the Nicaraguan Government until December 1, 1974, when the newly elected government is scheduled to take office.
- 5/ Peru: Since the Velasco Government came to power in the October 1968 coup, political party influence in the government has been effectively neutralized, although parties are free to carry on their activities. The National Congress was dissolved in October 1968.
- 6/ Trinidad and Tobago: The May 1971 parliamentary elections were boycotted by all of the major opposition parties (i.e., all parties except Williams' PNM); 36 percent of the total electorate participated in the elections.

PRINCIPAL SOURCES USED IN THE COMPILATION OF THIS TABLE:

I. Political data

Political Handbook and Atlas of the World, 1970 [Richard P. Stebbins and Alba Amoia, eds.] New York, Published for the Council on Foreign Relations by Simon & Schuster [c1970].

The World This Year: 1971 Supplement to The Political Handbook and Atlas of the World [Richard P. Stebbins and Alba Amoia, eds.] New York, Published for the Council on Foreign Relations by Simon & Schuster, [c1971].

Department of State. Bureau of Inter-American Affairs -- Desk officers for the Latin American and Caribbean nations.

Department of State. Bureau of Intelligence and Research. World Strengths of the Communist Party Organizations. 23rd annual report. 1971 edition. May 1971 [Department of State Publication 8526] Washington, Govt. Print. Off., 1971.

II. Population data

1971 World Population Data Sheet. Washington, D.C., Population Reference Bureau, Inc., June 1971.