

2-1-1994

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### Recommended Citation

David Ayon, Ellen Lutz, and Magdaleno Rose-Avila, *Panelists' Comments on the Presentation by Javier Livas and Samuel del Villar*, 16  
Loy. L.A. Int'l & Comp. L. Rev. 395 (1994).

Available at: <http://digitalcommons.lmu.edu/ilr/vol16/iss2/8>

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# Panelists' Comments on the Presentations by Javier Livas and Samuel del Villar

DAVID AYON  
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PROFESSOR AYON:\*

I've asked both Mr. Rose-Avila and Ms. Lutz to address several basic questions. Essentially, Mr. Livas and Mr. del Villar presented the case that elections and democracy need to be viewed as a human right that the international human rights community has to regard, along with others, as fundamental. I've asked them to address the following questions:

- (1) How have their organizations—Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International—approached the question of elections and democracy as a human right?
- (2) Do they, as organizations, monitor electoral events that the Mexican courts are proscribed from reviewing?
- (3) Should human rights organizations and the human rights community be reviewing electoral events and placing priority on free and fair elections?
- (4) Do their organizations take official positions on government compliance with international human rights conventions insofar as they address elections and democracy?

Ms. LUTZ:\*\*

America's Watch monitors human rights conditions. We are a division of the international organization Human Rights Watch, which monitors human rights abuses in countries around the world. We focus primarily on those rights that relate to the physical integrity of the person. These include the right not to be tortured or

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mistreated, the right to due process of law, and the right not to be killed or "disappeared." We also look very closely at the realm of political rights: freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, and freedom of association. We do that because we view the protection of political rights as the essential foundation for the protection of all other rights.

The idea is that, in a society that permits freedom of speech, freedom of association, and freedom of assembly, the basic ability of the citizenry to participate fully in democratic life exists. That's the best mechanism for protecting against all other violations of human rights. In societies in which free expression is not quashed, citizens speak out about abuses that they observe in the electoral realm, in the workers' realm, or in the environmental realm. Free exercise of political rights enables citizens to protest when they see that something is wrong, to put pressure on their government to correct those wrongs, and to hold their government accountable for the failure to correct those wrongs. From our point of view, political rights are the fundamental underpinnings of any regime that is going to protect all other human rights.

The case example of Mexico is very important because, over a period now of about four years, we have documented a whole array of human rights abuses taking place there that relate to the physical integrity of the person. These abuses include torture involved in police interrogations, interference with labor activists, intimidation of human rights monitors, and even a couple of cases of killing journalists. In some of those areas, the Government has instituted very significant reforms, and, in many respects, we have congratulated the Government on those reforms. The problem, however, is that, in a non-democratic regime like Mexico, those reforms can be "easy-come, easy-go." They can be put in place for a while, but then can be taken away again. This is because those reforms relate to a regime that is not fundamentally accountable to the democratic process or to the people as a whole. That is why we are working not just on monitoring the abuses, which we ordinarily monitor, but political rights as well. This is in order to ensure, for example, that the creation of National Human Rights Commission and other developments in the law do not become temporary facades. For the moment, they may look like they are mechanisms for improvement, but in fact, in another era under a different political climate, they could just be whisked away or filled with person-

nel that do not have a fundamental commitment to the protection of rights.

MR. ROSE-AVILA:\*\*\*

*Por primer parte, deberemos de saber que, "El respeto al derecho ajeno es la paz."*<sup>1</sup> If you respect somebody else's rights, you might also have peace. Amnesty International is a membership organization. We are also a non-partisan, non-political, volunteer organization. We do have members in Mexico. I must tell you that, when I talk about Mexico, particularly in Los Angeles, I am a bit humbled because there always seems to be an Amnesty International member in the audience who educated me about immigration rights and human rights inside of Mexico some twenty years ago. It was then that I began to understand what our responsibilities were as Chicanos and now our responsibilities as activists in a human rights organization.

The important thing to keep in mind when discussing Mexico, which is our neighbor, is that there is often a lot of fingerpointing at Mexico. Yet, those who monitor elections here in this country also find political intimidation, and still find places where people cannot run freely for an office. All you have to do is to talk to people from, for example, the Black Civil Rights Movement or Southwest Voter Registration. Talking about the history of voter education and struggles is not enough. As Fanny Lou Hammer said in this country (and people are saying in Mexico), "I'm sick and tired of being sick and tired." We must move the agenda further. One criticism of Western countries, I believe, is that we need to have one standard when dealing with elections.

I will talk to you about several countries where Amnesty International protects people who fight for freedom and democracy. In the Soviet Union, Andrei Sakharov, a scientist, stood up for freedom and for a more democratic thrust inside that country. In China's Tiananmen Square, there were the students who stood there, and many of them have been executed, shot, or tortured. Although the Chinese Government has released some known dissidents, many others are still in prison. Last year, China committed a thousand executions, and yet, people are eager to do business

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1. "First, we must understand that 'Respect for another's rights is peace.'"

with China without considering the human rights violations committed there.

When you talk about Burma (renamed Myanmar as of June 1989), which borders Thailand, and Aung San Suu Kyi and the seven Nobel Peace Prize laureates, you are talking about a woman who was imprisoned. She was not allowed to run for office for technicalities, and yet, her party won eighty-eight percent of the votes in the election. She was never put into power, and what did the governments of the world say? Nothing. They were silent. This was an election that they won fairly, without having the right to vote, to campaign, or to assemble. Even military garrisons voted for Aung San Suu Kyi's party, and yet they have not recognized that election.

When people examine and monitor elections, we need to protect the lives of those people over the years while they raise the issue. In Mexico, as in the recent elections in Kenya that were very flawed, we must protect the people who have been working to improve the electoral system over the years. You have to understand it from an international perspective because people who work with human rights in Mexico must tell world governments that they must have one election standard. When you look at elections and you talk about the protection of human rights workers, you talk about the protection of elections. We did not see the Western world funnelling money into Mexico so that opposition parties could have a fair, or more equal, election as they did inside Nicaragua. If the Sandanista elections would have had as many flaws as the elections in Mexico, they would have had the Western world down their throats. The Western world has to have one standard for human rights and for the protection of human rights by which it judges all countries. We cannot just say that, on one occasion only, we will protect the fighters of freedom, the fighters of free elections, or the fighters of unions.

Voting takes place on a regular basis in Mexico. The people in the political parties who we represent when the Mexican Government chastises, imprisons, or tortures them are not the only ones voting. There are people voting, not just in the ballot box, but by participating in unions or by demonstrating in the streets or on their campus. The indigenous people who struggle for the protection of their own rights, lifestyle, and heritage inside of Mexico are

also casting votes. Each human rights activist we protect is voting everyday on behalf of Mexico.

You cannot have political rights if you do not have human rights. If you have a political atmosphere that protects full human rights, you will have political rights, and then you will have protection of those people who want to speak out against the government. Our job in Amnesty International, which begins when a government tries to silence people, is to work on behalf of those people. The challenge for political parties in all sectors of Mexico is to include in their own constitutions, platforms, or bylaws clear language that supports the full protection of human rights for everyone. If you have protection of civil and political rights, you can have peace.

We must insure that the people who receive *El Aguila Azteca*<sup>2</sup> are those who work on protecting immigrant rights, refugee rights, and human rights. We should always acknowledge those who point out our errors and show us the right road for the future. We should not recognize those who accept our wrongs, faults, or history. Mexico has made some incredible steps; it has many more steps to make. Many governments say that they will do something and many governments sign-on to conventions such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Now, they must learn actually to implement these laws. Our job at Amnesty International is to make sure that the governments in fact enforce these laws. Another part of our work at Amnesty International is to make sure that international covenants on women's rights, human rights, and children's rights, as well as on civil and political rights, are adopted. These covenants mark the beginning of the international community's participation and education about the responsibilities they have to the people of Mexico.

PROFESSOR AYON:

I'd like to explore this relationship between democracy and human rights by continuing to raise a few more questions.' A more specific sort of question for either Amnesty International or America's Watch is: have you, do you, or would you support a specific complaint regarding an electoral event or procedure such as those filed by these parties before the Inter-American Commission

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2. "*El Aguila Azteca*" is Mexico's highest honor awarded by the President to any foreign nationality who helps the country or its citizens.

on Human Rights, and what are the issues surrounding your participation in such a procedure?

Ms. LUTZ:

One thing America's Watch does not do is monitor elections. We don't do that principally because of a lack of capacity and, in the particular case of Mexico, the job is done very well by people in Mexico. We have never seen ourselves as an institution that replaces domestic monitors of human rights; rather, we are principally an organization that supports and promotes the efforts of domestic activists to exercise their fundamental human rights. Therefore, one or two researchers from America's Watch could not, in any responsible manner, go to Mexico and measure the vote at any given time. We don't monitor elections anywhere in the world as a matter of policy. We do, however, monitor the conditions around elections very carefully to determine whether the climate is fair. Particularly, we monitor abuses against individuals that fall under the realm of the person's physical integrity. In the particular case of the upcoming elections in the State of Guerrero, we are on alert because we are concerned that violations might occur during the course of the elections or afterwards.

In elections, too frequently in the past few years, monitors have been intimidated on election day, driven away from the polling places and chased out of town, sometimes through high-speed car chases. After the elections, there has been a pattern of abuse when people protest electoral fraud. The citizenry uses the one mechanism that is available in Mexico for protest. They go to the city square and stand there with signs, screaming and yelling, "We want this looked at seriously!" This is a problem in Mexico, because no court procedures or legislative mechanisms exist for challenging electoral fraud. Consequently, the only mechanism Mexicans have for protest, is protest. And when that protest is interfered with violently, or a climate of violence exists, then we monitor that area very carefully. We try to publicize these abuses to the greatest extent possible. We feel we have a good capacity, in cooperation with human rights groups and political groups in Mexico, to carry out that kind of monitoring and publicity.

PROFESSOR AYON:

And would you ever weigh in on a specific dispute, such as those before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, which is electorally related?

Ms. LUTZ:

We probably wouldn't because it's being done very well by the Mexican political groups at this point. This is not to say that we wouldn't mount a petition with respect to Mexico in the Inter-American system. One of the things I want to point out is that the United States is not a party to the American Convention on Human Rights. This means that the United States can't use this mechanism for pressuring the Mexican Government. We have placed immense pressure on the United States Government to ratify the American Convention on Human Rights, so that we are in a parallel legal position to Mexico. Moreover, we have pressured both the United States and the Mexican Governments to accept the compulsory jurisdiction of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. By doing so, cases of electoral fraud in Mexico won't just go to the Commission and stop dead with a recommendation. They could then be adjudicated in an international court proceeding that has the authority to place an order on Mexico that's stronger than a Commission recommendation. To protest effectively, the people of Mexico need a judicial mechanism to hear their plea. We've been pushing both Mexico and the United States to take steps to become equal legal players by accepting the Court's jurisdiction. This would give both countries the same legal framework in which to push each other, not just on election issues, but a variety of other issues.

It's a very important role for us to give maximum publicity to the efforts undertaken by Mexican human rights and political groups to bring complaints to the Inter-American Commission. We work to publicize the findings and call on the Government of Mexico to honor its obligation to carry out the decision. We haven't really considered, up until now, bringing a proceeding before the Inter-American Court.

MR. ROSE-AVILA:

Normally, Amnesty International is not involved with election results as much as the right of the people to protest and file challenges. Where there is a corrupt election, you will find that it is not



an easy process for people to challenge it. We've gone to work on behalf of a number of individuals inside of Mexico who have been tortured, threatened, killed, or "disappeared" because of their political opposition to the Mexican Government. Our job is to protect the rights of the individual. Yet, it is clear that, with the growing number of human rights activists, political activists, and monitoring groups inside Mexico, there is a need for some international organization to focus on all of Latin America. We need organizations like Southwest Voter Registration to monitor election results, publicize the data, and assess whether the electoral district's voting process were fair. The human rights organizations that exist now do not include in their charters the oversight of these processes. But, this does not mean that a new organization couldn't be created that would address this need specifically.

**PROFESSOR AYON:**

I'd like to ask Mr. Livas and Mr. del Villar to address the following question. What has been the response from the international human rights community to the argument that human rights are being violated through the Mexican electoral system?

**MR. DEL VILLAR:**

There has already been major use of work regarding the violence in Mexico. Miguel Agustín Pro is the only national Mexican organization on human rights dealing with political issues and reporting the systematic violation of political rights. The evidence they've gathered was used to support our claims of institutional fraud. For instance, in a complaint we introduced to the National Congress, or the *Camara de Diputados*, the evidence produced by Miguel Agustín Pro regarding the homicides in the State of Guerrero was very significant.

We used the America's Watch report to support our claim in the Inter-American Commission regarding the repression of the marches on the 27th of February. Ultimately, if the Inter-Commission of Human Rights comes out with its ombudsman type of recommendation regarding the political violations that we've denounced, then international organizations might bring support to the compliance of those recommendations. That would be very useful. For instance, if Mr. Livas' complaint regarding the Governability Clause or my complaint regarding voter lists results in a recommendation, then the support of Amnesty International

and America's Watch will pressure the Mexican Government to enact these reforms.

It should be pointed out that an extraordinary effort has been made by local human rights organizations in Mexico to move into this field of political rights observation and denunciation. They have been grouped around an organization called the Convergence of Civil Organizations for Democracy, or *Convergencia*. They produced, for the 1991 elections and the Michoacán election, some excellent, very detailed reports that proved to be highly significant.

MR. LIVAS:

For the last eight years, I have been working as an electoral detective, and I am sick of it. When you follow all the signs and footprints, they lead to Washington, D.C., because the United States Government has a double standard. It treats Mexico very differently than it treats other countries. Every six years, when we have a near collapse of the Mexican economy, the United States brings out its wallet to pay the bill; then it starts all over again.

The question for you is, what are you going to do so that we can live in harmony and in strict observance of genuine, honest, and free elections? This is not a right of the Mexicans derived from their Government or a right of the Americans derived from their Government, but the creation of a new sphere of rights going beyond the borders of the individual nation states. I understand the conventions to be a creation of a new international citizenry. This makes me an equal of Bill Clinton or of any of you. We should give ourselves mutual support to get rid of what is being done wrong, whether it's happening here, there, Nicaragua, Cuba, or wherever. But I have followed the tracks and they lead to Washington, D.C.

I have tried to prove today that you don't have to look for electoral fraud in the stuffing of ballot boxes; we have done that. It is structural in the laws, in the *padrones*, and in the fact that the Mexican Government has total control of the elections. They have been refining their methods over and over again.

I have with me a little book that I recently printed. It is a transcript of six hours of conversation with an electoral engineer, a man who was paid by the Party of the Institutional Revolution ("PRI") for fifteen years to create electoral fraud. He reveals

everything. This is why I started this conference with the statement that Mexico is governed by liars and cheats.

This man, in front of a camera, reveals everything on how he would work on "quality control." After the election, he would go into a room and doctor the results. Because the fraud was organized in a decentralized fashion, some of the fraudulent engineers would get carried away and produce results beyond the 100% of people enrolled in a precinct. His job, as "quality control," was to make the numbers believable. He tells us how he was working within the Government palace in Monterrey and Nuevo León.

It is very clear that we need a high-tech communication strategy to force the United States Government to stop condoning electoral fraud in Mexico. We need to work together in this high-tech era of communications because they've been condoning it and everybody knows it. I've talked to the Congressmen and they know that fraud exists, but they have never had to confront it publicly. For this reason, I and some others are going to try to set up what we call Electoral Fraud Expo, or *Expo Fraude Electoral*, as an exposition in Washington, D.C. We're going to show the proof of the fraud for the world to see, and then we'll see what happens. This is the type of strategy we need.

**PROFESSOR AYON:**

I would like to hear from Ms. Lutz and Mr. Rose-Avila on the very important question raised by Mr. Livas. Mr. Livas sees a need for a high-tech communication strategy to change U.S. policy regarding Mexican election fraud. This would mean that, in the absence of this strategy, Mr. Livas is pessimistic about any change coming out of Washington.

Mr. Rose-Avila suggests, interestingly, that perhaps what is needed is a new Inter-American grassroots organization to pressure nations on political electoral rights. Ms. Lutz informed us that the United States has not endorsed the American Convention on Human Rights. Further, Mr. Livas broadly asserted that there exists a need for the creation of a whole new sphere of political rights that transcends questions of sovereignty of individual countries.

We have a new Administration in the United States, one which has made an issue of democracy in China and whether or not the annual renewal of "Most Favored Nation" trade status would be tied to democratization. The Administration is seriously in-

volved in trying to restore the democratically elected government in Haiti. President Clinton's Administration has found itself in deep trouble over some promises that have been made in connection with Haiti. President Clinton also supports a toughening of U.S. policy towards Cuba in the name of democratization of Cuba. How do you see the Clinton Administration on the question of elections and democracy in Mexico? Are you optimistic that this is going to be an issue as we move towards NAFTA ratification and the next Presidential election in Mexico?

MR. ROSE-AVILA:

This is the only time that I will be brief. First, we have to get the United States to recognize that there are human rights abuses in Mexico. Then, we can pressure it to protect many other things inside of Mexico.

Ms. LUTZ:

One of the things I always find curious is the fact that Mexico is one of the world's leading proponents of the doctrine of non-interference in internal affairs and sovereignty, and yet, it is more than willing to criticize the United States for abuses. In many cases, the abuse is directed at its nationals, like in the *Alvarez Machain* case. Other times, it has pressured the United States with respect to INS abuses. Mexico also expresses a general concern, for example, about the death penalty as a violation of human rights and some of our inner-city problems.

On the other hand, the United States has a huge body of law directing the Government to withhold trade, aid, and special relationships to countries that engage in gross and persistent violations of human rights. Nevertheless, the United States is utterly silent about human rights conditions in Mexico. The attitude that was taken by President George Bush's Administration and in most of the previous twelve years has been either that (1) they are not interested in human rights conditions in Mexico or (2) they have assumed that President Salinas has control over them and that they are not really a big problem. Even though they can identify a long list of human rights violations, we have seen virtually no pressure from the United States Government on Mexico. Obviously, the United States absolutely resists any form of pressure that Mexico tends to exert. In this era, there needs to be a much greater bilateral opening on this issue. Both Governments need to focus their

attention on the abuses being inflicted on the other side of the border, as well as in their own, and they need to apply pressure that is listened to and respected on the other side.

One of the vehicles for achieving this necessary cooperation could be the acceptance of the Inter-American Court or other regime mechanisms so that there is a forum for adjudicating human rights issues. I am actually finding it quite hard to read whether the Clinton Administration will or will not do that. Many people tell me that they expect a different level of performance from the Clinton Administration, but I think the jury is still out on this one. It is the responsibility of groups like America's Watch and other non-governmental organizations to keep the heat up. In fact, they should intensify it in this period to make it perfectly clear that these are really important issues and that this is the right time.

PROFESSOR AYON:

Mr. del Villar, you said that the Clinton Administration, in your view, has not focused yet on Mexico. I couldn't read your statement as to whether or not you are optimistic that when they do focus on Mexico, democracy and human rights would be of concern.

MR. DEL VILLAR:

We're touching on an overall perception, and, inevitably, one has to return to what happened in the 1988 Presidential election. A miracle happened. A man named Mr. Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, with a campaign budget half that of Mr. Carlos Salinas, overcame all those mechanisms that were brilliantly described here and won the election. It took everyone by surprise. Prior to that, when the right wing National Action Party ("PAN") had the lead and it was a major electoral challenge, it was very clear the kind of pressure that the U.S. Government was putting on the Mexican Government to open up the system. But after this happened in 1988, a year I consider holy, an alliance was formed among the Mexican Government, the United States Administration, and the PAN. They united to declare that the leftist nationalists, who represent the Mestizo people, will not govern Mexico. At one point, it gave me the impression that the United States was looking at Mr. Cárdenas as if he was an Ayatollah.

The parties to the alliance gave their full support to Salinas. I am not sure if they paid the bill. I assume the bill will be paid by

Mexico. Salinas' ultimate support, in the end, was the financial support coming from the United States in exchange for nothing. United States exports into Mexico have tripled or quadrupled, while U.S. imports from Mexico are down. It has been an excellent business alliance for the United States, but I don't know what to expect from the new Administration and there are cultural differences to consider.

Most of the liberals and democratic academicians in the United States who deal with Mexico are *Salinistas*. You will find that most of the Mexicanologists, who tend to be Democrats within the political spectrum of the United States, are *Salinistas*. People like Wayne Cornelius are friends of Salinas.

I don't know how President Clinton will view Mexico and its problem with human rights and elections. He's an exact opposite of Mr. Bush. It's a different generation, a generation from the Vietnam War, with a different concept of human rights. He didn't go to Vietnam and I don't know how all this will ultimately boil down. He doesn't know Mexico personally. His priorities are domestic, and, unless a major crisis occurs in Mexico that will overcome the prevailing bureaucratic attitude and perceptions towards Mexico, we might not see a significant change in U.S. policy towards Mexico.

PROFESSOR AYON:

I take it then that you're not exactly hopeful on the question as I raise it.

MR. ROSE-AVILA:

One of the questions was: "Are there good people who understand Mexico and human rights in this country?" Last year, I was speaking at Stanford and the President of Mexico was there, too. Even though I was a formal invitee as a speaker, his security tried to keep me from going to the formal dinner because they said Amnesty International might embarrass him. Knowing what they know about human rights in Mexico, Jack Otero of the Brotherhood of Railroad and Airline Clerks Union and Henry Cisneros intervened on my behalf.

SYMPOSIUM ATTENDEE:

A man who hijacked a plane in New York was immediately apprehended and sent to jail. A Cuban skyjacker, however, came

to Miami and was given immediate political asylum. How is this consistent?

MR. ROSE-AVILA:

In our refugee work, we've been critical of the Government's double standard. We always ask for one standard. They will accept Cubans coming in, yet turn boats of Haitians away on a regular basis. This Government needs to address the problems surrounding its refugee policy, which it hasn't changed in twenty years. Every person seeking political refuge needs to have a fair political asylum hearing, regardless of his or her political view. You cannot give automatic access to the Cubans if you are not going to give it to the Haitians. This happened in Chile when it was overthrown by Augusto Pinochet. They kept Chileños, students, and others from coming to the United States because their political beliefs were not to the liking of the United States. We should not judge people by their political beliefs, but by their efforts to seek political asylum. We must give everybody a fair hearing.

SYMPOSIUM ATTENDEE:

Since there is political electoral reform going on in Mexico, how can Mexicans living in the United States participate in Mexico's political process?

MR. DEL VILLAR:

Mexican citizens within Mexico are informally deprived of their political rights through the electoral process, but Mexican citizens living abroad are formally deprived of that right. They don't even have the theoretical possibility to contribute to the integration of public authority into the Mexican Government. We've been supporting, through legislation, the constitutional rights of Mexicans abroad to vote in federal elections for President, for deputies or *deputados*, and for federal senators. The resistance of the Mexican Government has been enormous. The way to participate is for Mexican citizens who live abroad to organize around this fight. If Mexican citizens living abroad are denied formally and theoretically the right to vote, then they will be denied everything else. The core of their political participation is the right to vote. They have comparative advantages to the people in Guerrero in fighting to validate their rights. Mexican citizens living abroad are of higher sensitivity to the Mexican Government. For example, a

demonstration of Mexican citizens in Los Angeles demanding the right to vote would be much more significant than demonstrations in Guerrero. Therefore, that would be my suggestion for action. The first course of action is to have the right to vote abroad granted by the Mexican Government.

SYMPOSIUM ATTENDEE:

I understand that there are reforms in the Salinas Administration involving the Attorney General and the federal police. Are those real? And is there optimism about the federal judicial police?

MR. DEL VILLAR:

The Attorney General was the former ombudsman in Mexico and head of the National Commission of Human Rights. It was only an effort to soften somewhat this generalized structure of the human rights violations. Mr. Jorge Carpizo, while ombudsman, gave testimony indicative of a man who is absolutely impartial and effective. Some of our most difficult cases, cases in which Mr. Salinas was very much involved, were found by the commission against the views of Mr. Salinas. We have one particular case involving a mayor of our party and massive people in Michoacán. Mr. Carpizo ultimately liberated all of them. I think he's a man of integrity.

He has been Attorney General for approximately a month and has been making unusual appointments. I hope they work. He's appointed major human rights fighters as the equivalent of United States attorneys, and some aren't even lawyers. I don't know how that happens when you have twenty-five judicial police officers who have the same functional positions. Other than that, I don't see any significant changes. I think it's important that a man like Carpizo, who has been identified for his work for the protection of human rights, has been appointed Attorney General at this point. If they would have appointed one of those *Ministerios Publicos Federales*—those killers—I would be very frightened about violence.

MR. LIVAS:

That goes to show that Carlos Salinas is very worried about international pressure. When he gets pressure from leaders of foreign countries, he does the right thing. There's no doubt about that, absolutely no doubt. Perhaps he'll take bigger chances with



regard to his party structure when he gets the pressure. So it has to keep coming. It's the only thing that will get Salinas to respond.

We've proven here that there's no way that we can achieve change through internal mechanisms in Mexico. There's just no way. I think the 1994 election will get very messy if nothing is done. But there's still time to do something about it, and action has to come through external pressure. If the Government feels that the dollar-flow is going to stop for whatever reason, they'll do whatever it takes to keep them coming. Maybe that's the only answer.

Ms. LUTZ:

The reforms are the product of the fear of external pressure, without any external pressure ever being issued. That has been a pattern with Salinas. He acts in anticipation of external pressure that, in fact, never materializes. In this particular instance, he named Mr. Carpizo as Attorney General on January 4th and met with Mr. Clinton for the first time four or five days later. These events occurred less than a week apart. I think that he, anticipating that there could be a problem here, decided to cover his bases first. It shows what would happen if you really put the pressure on.

SYMPOSIUM ATTENDEE:

If the Inter-American Commission came out with a recommendation, would America's Watch or Amnesty International feel that it was appropriate to use the reports to bring about change in Mexico?

Ms. LUTZ:

We absolutely do that already. The Inter-American Commission has issued very strongly-worded reports with respect to Mexico's political realm. We use them in many advocacy mechanisms employed to put pressure on Mexico. I don't want to rule it out. I would just say that, as a matter of the highest priority, the trick is to get the complaints before the Commission.

When it's being done very well by groups from within a country, one does not attempt to supplant them. The whole point of our work is to support and encourage that kind of activity, to help publicize the results of that activity, and to keep the pressure on. That isn't a ducking of responsibility, it is simply trying to put resources to their best possible use.

MR. ROSE-AVILA:

Amnesty International presents our concerns on a regular basis at the United Nations, the Organization of American States, and other organizations regarding various countries, including Mexico. As part of our testimony in Congress, before the United Nations or other groups, we always present the economic and political climate creating these human rights abuses so that it's clear where we stand. We present what we think are the issues creating it, just as we would talk about the apartheid system inside of South Africa creating racism and abuse of human rights. Further, we continue to pressure those bodies to influence particular governments to correct their human rights abuses. It is always helpful when an international body takes a stand. Our issue has been that not enough of the international organizations are taking strong enough stands that can actually be used as further documentation of human rights abuse.

SYMPOSIUM ATTENDEE:

What prospects does the PRD have for uniting a coalition of popular movements that could actually win the next Presidential election in Mexico?

MR. DEL VILLAR:

I am not sure that a coalition would be as significant as it was in 1988. I think the PRD might provide the licensing mechanism so that the candidacy of Mr. Cárdenas will be acknowledged. The coalition of 1988 was with various political parties, and there was no actual political party based upon Mr. Cárdenas' position. What is interesting for this year is not a coalition with political parties, but with citizen organizations, with individuals who serve in their communities and have given testimony. I think that such a coalition and alliance would provide the intermediate leadership that might be required in the 1994 election. The important thing is to have the fraudulent infrastructure overturned so that the actual and free election of the people might be respected. One person one vote. "*Gane quien gane, pierde quien pierde.*" That's the core of the issue.

