Mexican Electoral Fraud Wins Round One – Round Two Now Begins

t was no surprise on Sunday that the Mexican Federal Electoral Institute (IFE) ruled its partial recount of about 9% of the ballots cast in the disputed presidential election held on July 2 showed ruling National Action Party (PAN) candidate still the winner. In doing so, the IFE ignored the clear evidence of election irregularities and blatant fraud uncovered by losing Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) candidate Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador. The IFE ignored the need for a total ballot recount Obrador justifiably demanded and instead relied on the small partial one it chose in areas of known Calderon strength making it unlikely from the start it would find enough of a change in the final tally to change the election result. Lopez Obrador aides cited evidence of overwhelming fraud in at least one-third of the polling stations and that any failure to do a recount in all of them would show clear IFE bias toward its announced winner on July 6 and would not be accepted without a concerted fight. Let the battle begin.

The fraud uncovered so far showed the preliminary vote totals were manipulated to allow PAN candidate Felipe Calderon to be the winner. In addition, three million votes were never counted at first and only in hindsight were 2.5 million of them added to the totals. Further, 900,000 supposedly void, blank and annulled ballots were declared null, discarded and never included in the official totals; 700,000 additional votes disappeared from missing precincts; thousands of voters were denied their franchise in strong Obrador precincts; there was evidence of ballot stuffing; and in about one-third of the polling stations only winning party PAN observers were present allowing ample opportunity for vote manipulation as has happened routinely in a country known for its history of electoral unfairness and where political dirty tricks and hardball tactics may have been invented. It takes no stretch to know it was no different this time, and Lopez Obrador now demands this injustice be addressed and corrected.

Obrador promised he will not go gently "into that good night" and will fight on to be declared the winner of the election it clearly looks like he won but so far has been denied. He now plans to file new charges of widespread fraud found during the recount process. The discoveries include broken seals on some ballot boxes and evidence showing the number of ballots in ballot boxes differed from the number of blank ballots cast. Additional evidence will seek to annul the results from thousands of polling stations Felipe Calderon won by a margin great enough to indicate significant manipulation of the count was likely. Lawyers for Mr. Obrador now claim these irregularities alone warrant a full ballot recount, and Mexico City Mayor-elect Marcelo Ebrard said: "There is now so much evidence of fraud that the court will have to act."

Part of that evidence is the illegal campaigning ruling PAN President Vincinte Fox did for Mr. Calderon and the fact that Felipe Calderon exceeded his legally allowed campaign spending limits. He did it to run vicious negative advertising through the business-friendly Mexican corporate media calling Obrador an evil twin of Venezuela's Hugo Chavez, falsely accusing him of accepting campaign funds from the Venezuelan President, claiming Obrador was guilty of corruption as mayor of Mexico City with no evidence to prove it, and of being a "danger" for Mexico.

It was also learned early on that Felipe Calderon's brother-in-law Diego Hildebrando Zavala wrote the vote-counting software, and it was hacked during the electoral process. This discovery of a close family member having control of the computer systems is evidence enough of grossly improper activity that could easily have resulted in vote count manipulation to give the electoral victory to the candidate he obviously favored. Again, it takes no stretch to imagine Mr. Zavala took full advantage of his ability to decide the outcome.

It should be duly noted and stressed that in Latin America no greater contrast can be drawn in how elections are run than to compare the scrupulously honest and democratic process under Hugo Chavez in Venezuela to the hopelessly corrupted one in Mexico. It wasn't always that way in Venezuela, but once Hugo Chavez was elected he established constitutionally by national referendum a system of real participatory democracy where the Venezuelan people actually have a say in how the government is run including being the ones to decide in fair, open and honest elections who will be elected including the President. In Mexico, it's long been just the opposite. There the interests of wealth and power control the process and see to it their chosen candidates run the country for their benefit.

Round Two Now Begins As Lopez Obrador Intends To Fight On

Lopez Obrador made it clear after the July 6 announced results that he intended to continue fighting for electoral justice and has asked his supporters to rally in the streets around the country to demand it. Already major demonstrations have been held in Mexico City's huge Zocalo plaza. At a recent one as many as a record near-two million turned out to show their support for their candidate. Lopez Obrador now promises this will continue, and in a speech Sunday to many thousands assembled in the Zocalo to hear him he said his campaign for an honest recount will continue indefinitely in the courts and in the streets. With the many millions of Mexicans fed up with politics as usual, it now remains to be seen if their mass-people power can overcome a Mexican tradition of entrenched wealth and power always having it their way and the people be damned. It will be an uphill battle, but don't count the people out yet.

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