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# THE VIRTUES OF PARALLEL VOTE TABULATIONS

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During the past decade, nonpartisan international and domestic election monitoring has grown increasingly sophisticated. Observers no longer limit themselves to assessing election-day mechanics, but evaluate elections in their totality, considering the nature of the campaign period, the integrity of the polling and counting procedures, and the willingness of the population to accept the results. The lion's share of the monitors' attention, however, still goes to the balloting and vote tabulation, the stages where chicanery is most likely to occur. Mere suspicions of fraud, if sufficiently widespread, can discredit an election and undermine the legitimacy of its result. Thus both representatives of domestic monitoring organizations and international observers have striven to develop effective means for evaluating how ballots are counted and results tabulated.

Most monitors agree that they must have the ability to verify independently the accuracy of the results reported by the electoral authorities. Various terms are used to describe the process whereby election monitors record results obtained from individual polling sites and compare these findings with official results. We prefer the term "parallel vote tabulation" (PVT), which is used throughout this article. "Parallel" is used to distinguish the operation from the official vote tabulation conducted by designated government authorities. The term "tabulation" is preferred to "count" because the latter implies opening and recording individual ballots, a task normally reserved for officials. This task too must be effectively monitored, but this essay focuses on efforts to keep

tabs on the summing (i.e., tabulation) of results from individual polling sites, and not on the actual counting of ballots.

Nowhere is the necessity for independent verification more acute than in elections that launch a transition from nondemocratic rule to a more democratic system of government. The impact of PVTs in such elections has been profound:

- In the Philippines (1986) and Panama (1989), PVTs established a victory by opposition forces, despite government attempts to manipulate the results;
- In Paraguay (1989) and Bulgaria (1990), PVTs confirmed a ruling-party victory, overcoming suspicions of electoral fraud among opposition forces;
- In Chile (1988) and Nicaragua (1990), PVTs helped to convince the ruling party that it should publicly acknowledge an opposition victory and not attempt to manipulate the official results;
- In Haiti (1990), Bulgaria (1991), and Albania (1992), PVTs provided reliable data considerably before the release of the official results, thus avoiding suspicions that may have arisen in the absence of such information; and
- In Zambia (1991), a PVT was used to boost confidence in the election process and to deter possible manipulation—the operation accurately projected the results in the presidential election, indicating a three-to-one victory by the challenger.

### **Quick Counts and Full Counts**

Throughout the world, political parties, media organizations, and academic researchers often compile unofficial tallies of election returns. These parallel counts are such a proven part of the electoral process that little attention is usually paid to them. The situation is different, however, in emerging democracies or countries where allegations of vote fraud have some resonance. In such circumstances, PVTs can encourage participation by convincing prospective voters that their ballots will be accurately tabulated; deter fraud by increasing the prospect that it will be uncovered; reveal manipulated vote totals; promote the reporting of timely and credible, albeit unofficial, election results; and provide a focus for election monitors.

For a PVT to enhance confidence and deter fraud, three conditions must be met. First, the sponsors of the operation must be viewed as independent and honest by a large segment of the population; thus, parties and government-controlled media often do not qualify. Second, the mechanics of the vote-count operation must generally be thought capable of providing accurate data—the more complicated the operation, the more difficult it will be for skeptical government officials and the general public to understand and accept. Third, the sponsor must conduct

the operation openly with an attendant press and public relations strategy, for a secret deterrent is of no value.

To fulfill the goals of revealing irregularities and providing timely results, a PVT must be accurate, credible, speedy, and comprehensive. In some cases, the immediate goals and limited resources of the sponsoring organization might necessitate trade-offs between these last two attributes. In practical terms, this means choosing between a system that relies on random sampling and statistics to project the outcome based on the results from a limited number of polling sites, and a system that collects and tabulates the results from *all* polling sites.

The strategic choice between speed and comprehensiveness is relatively simple: if it is necessary to obtain accurate, credible election returns quickly, then random sampling is more appropriate. On the other hand, if only a comprehensive polling-site count will suffice to convince the electorate of the true results, then a more complete, and necessarily slower, system should be employed.

The more rapid systems, often referred to as “quick counts,” usually rely on returns and projections based on the near-science of statistics. If properly conceived, adequately publicized, and precisely executed, a quick-count system will meet the criteria of accuracy, credibility, and speed, and can be accomplished by tabulating results from as few as several hundred randomly selected polling sites. In most circumstances, the media and the international community will rely on a credibly implemented quick count as projecting correct results even when the electoral authorities and political parties are presenting no results or different results.

Despite the accuracy of sampling techniques, those who are unfamiliar with them often view these operations with apprehension. Technical references to “confidence levels” and “margins of error” arouse further concern that a projected outcome can somehow be manipulated or might simply be wrong.<sup>1</sup> To overcome these anxieties, a comprehensive tabulation system is often used to back up the sampling system. Such a dual effort provides the means for contesting contradictory results on election night, while also ensuring that polling-site information is available to evaluate legal or other challenges to the results in the days and weeks following the initial counting of the ballots.

In planning a verification effort, it is important to recognize at the outset the critical difference between a PVT and an exit poll. Exit polls rely on answers provided by randomly selected voters after they have cast their ballots. By contrast, PVTs are based upon actual results as counted by polling-site officials—and verified by partisan pollwatchers and other eyewitnesses—after the closing of the polls.

In stable democracies, exit polls can provide reasonably accurate and timely projections of election results because there are few, if any, incentives for voters to disguise their preferences. Indeed, exit polls often

project results even before the polls officially close. The situation is different in countries undergoing transitions. First, there seldom exists an electoral history capable of providing a basis for demographic or statistical comparison between the results of earlier elections and the trends evident in the current exit polls. More importantly, voters in a transition situation may feel uncomfortable about revealing their choices to strangers claiming to be pollsters. Finally, exit polling does not sit easily with the emphasis in many transitional elections on the secrecy of the ballot. Citing these factors, the opposition successfully pressed for a prohibition on the use of exit polls in the 1990 Bulgarian elections.

In several countries, the implementation of a PVT has afforded nascent civic groups an excellent opportunity to organize. Implementing a PVT provides monitoring groups with a precise task: the collection of polling-place results. The existence of these groups prevents overreliance on international observers and furnishes a constructive outlet to those who prefer not to participate directly in party politics. At the same time, these groups, which often draw upon volunteers who oppose the incumbent government, must take pains to establish their impartiality, particularly in their implementation of a PVT.

PVTs require the creation of a sophisticated communications network and reliance on the professional expertise of statisticians, computer specialists, and others. Following the elections, the skills and networks developed in conducting a PVT can be utilized in undertaking other broad-based civic activities. Furthermore, the continued existence of nonpartisan organizations contributes to the development of civil society and promotes citizen participation in politics.

Considerations involved in developing an effective PVT vary by country, but there has also been an evolution in the methodology used in implementing these efforts. Indeed, organizers of one PVT have often found themselves asked to help develop similar operations in other countries. This growing interaction among democratic activists worldwide is a significant result of international political development programs.

While there is no final recipe for how best to monitor campaigns and voting, those seeking to promote public confidence in elections can learn a great deal from the cases discussed below.

***The Philippines.*** Soon after the August 1983 assassination of opposition leader Benigno Aquino, a debate ensued among opponents of the Marcos regime over participation in future elections.<sup>2</sup> Many prominent Filipinos urged a boycott of any elections held under Marcos on the grounds that he would never permit fair elections and would use opposition participation to legitimize his regime. Advocates of opposition participation rejoined that elections could become a vehicle for demonstrating Marcos's lack of popular support.

The organizers of the National Citizens Movement for Free Elections

(NAMFREL) belonged to the latter group. They encouraged participation in the elections, promoted reform of the election law, and sought to organize a comprehensive monitoring effort for the 1984 legislative elections. Thus by 1986, when Marcos called a snap presidential election, NAMFREL had established a presence throughout the country and, with the considerable assistance of the Roman Catholic Church, mobilized more than half a million Filipinos to participate in a nonpartisan monitoring program.

A major aspect of NAMFREL's effort was Operation Quick Count, a plan designed to provide for the swift release of accurate information regarding the election results, in hopes of deterring Marcos from tampering with the tabulation process. If that failed, the Quick Count would provide a basis for exposing fraud and determining the actual winner of the election in the eyes of both the Filipino electorate and the world at large.

The latter scenario was the one that materialized. In the 1986 presidential election, NAMFREL volunteers obtained results from approximately 70 percent of the 85,000 polling sites. Filipinos, the international community, and important elements of the military accepted NAMFREL's results—which showed Corazon Aquino (the widow of Benigno) leading Marcos—as more credible than the official results indicating a Marcos victory. Overcoming considerable government obstructionism and even state-sponsored violence in some areas, the NAMFREL organizers ran a monitoring effort whose success can be attributed in large part to its open and transparent nature. Before the election, information relating to Operation Quick Count was widely disseminated to the public, the news media, and international observers.

NAMFREL again used a quick-count system during the 1987 legislative elections. Following overwhelming victories by Aquino-backed Senate candidates, opposition leader Juan Ponce Enrile alleged fraud, citing erroneous initial results released by NAMFREL to bolster his charge. NAMFREL officials conceded an administrative error and sought to regain public confidence by submitting their results to independent review. Ultimately, NAMFREL's credibility convinced domestic and world opinion that, with a few exceptions, the 1987 results reported by the Commission of Elections reflected the will of the people. The opposition's protests soon faded.

**Chile.** Influenced by the Philippine experience, a group of independent political figures in Chile, many of them associated with the Roman Catholic Church, formed the Committee for Free Elections. Together with a coalition of opposition parties operating as the Command for the No, the Committee sought a change in the 1980 Constitution, which called for a yes-or-no vote on the military junta's nominee for president. When constitutional change proved unobtainable, the Command and the

Committee decided to participate in the 1988 plebiscite and to develop an effective monitoring operation as the best means for restoring democracy.<sup>3</sup>

In implementing its PVT, the Committee's methodology differed from that used by NAMFREL. Instead of attempting to collect results from each of Chile's 22,000 polling sites, the Committee decided to base its PVT on a statistical projection. Before the plebiscite, the Committee randomly selected 10 percent of the polling sites for inclusion in its count. On plebiscite day (5 October 1988), volunteers from the civic group Civitas obtained the results from the designated polling sites and transmitted them to a tabulation center in Santiago.

Partial results released by the Committee four hours after the polls closed showed the "No" votes ahead by a margin of 55 percent to 43 percent. The Committee released a second set of results two hours later; by this time, 1,600 of the 2,200 sample polling sites had reported, and the "No" remained ahead with 55 percent of the vote. The Committee's results were virtually identical to the final official results.

The importance of the quick count was demonstrated on the night of the plebiscite. The Interior Ministry announced no official figures until 2 a.m., several hours after the polls closed, despite promises that the results would be released immediately upon receipt. Some feared wholesale manipulation or even nullification of the results. The announcement of the Command for the No's comprehensive and credible PVT, together with the early projections released by the Committee for Free Elections, helped convince key Pinochet supporters, including both proregime party leaders and members of the ruling junta, to acknowledge that "No" votes had carried the day. Once their concession statements were broadcast by the media, any effort to manipulate the results or nullify the plebiscite would have been transparent.

**Panama.** The 1989 elections in Panama again demonstrated the usefulness of a credible PVT.<sup>4</sup> As in Chile, separate PVTs were performed by a coalition of regime opponents working in tandem with a lay Catholic organization.

While the opposition sought to collect and tabulate results from the country's more than 4,400 polling sites, the Catholic group relied on a random sample. Volunteers were assigned to collect results from 440 randomly selected voting "tables" and to transmit these results to one of 50 collection sites. From these intermediary sites, results were transmitted to regional centers and then to the main center, which was located in a private home in Panama City.

Despite episodes of deliberate polling-site obstructionism that occurred in many regions during the counting phase, the quick-count operation proved effective in providing a timely and credible projection of how Panamanians had voted. The quick-count results showed an opposition



victory by a margin of 74 to 26 percent, with a margin of error of 10 percentage points.

Based on this quick count, and what appeared to be deliberate, government-orchestrated delays in the release of official results, the secretary of the Catholic Bishops' Conference acknowledged an opposition victory on the day following the elections. The quick-count results also formed the primary basis for the statement by former U.S. President Jimmy Carter, who led a team of international observers, attesting to an opposition victory in the presidential election. Notwithstanding the nullification of the elections by the Noriega-dominated national election tribunal, the results that the lay Catholic group reported, together with similar findings gathered by the opposition, convinced both the Panamanian people and the international community that the opposition had won the election.

Carter subsequently sought to convince the Organization of American States (OAS) to recognize the opposition victory based on the Church projection. The resolution that the OAS adopted ten days after the elections, however, limited itself to a condemnation of the Noriega government for "interfering with the electoral process."<sup>5</sup>

**Nicaragua.** The Nicaraguan elections of 25 February 1990 marked the first occasion on which intergovernmental organizations conducted PVTs. The United Nations and the OAS separately organized comprehensive monitoring efforts, which included the implementation of PVTs for the presidential race between incumbent Daniel Ortega and challenger Violeta Chamorro.

The UN effort relied exclusively on results from approximately three hundred randomly selected polling sites. The OAS operation involved both a projection based on a slightly larger random sample, and the collection of results from all 4,335 polling sites. The latter was designed to ensure that the OAS would be in a position to verify the results in the event of a close election.

There was initial resistance to the PVT from the Sandinista government, which argued that the effort might usurp the role of the Supreme Electoral Tribunal. The United Nations and OAS, meanwhile, were reluctant to proceed without explicit government authorization. Ultimately, however, all parties concerned came to realize that unless international observers verified the counting process, the losers would contest the results. Nonetheless, out of respect for Nicaraguan sensibilities, the UN and OAS agreed to withhold any public announcement of results until after consultations with the Supreme Electoral Tribunal and the leaders of the contesting parties.

Just before 10 o'clock on election night, the UN, using information gathered through its sophisticated communications network, projected a win for Mrs. Chamorro. This information was given to Elliot Richardson,

the UN secretary general's special representative, and Jimmy Carter, who was leading a high-level nongovernmental observer delegation.

Richardson and Carter immediately visited the Supreme Electoral Tribunal, where only a suspiciously small percentage of the results had been released. After informing the Tribunal chairman of the projected results, Richardson and Carter, together with OAS Secretary General João Baena Soares, met first with President Ortega and then with Mrs. Chamorro. Soon thereafter, results were forthcoming from the Electoral Tribunal, thus allaying concerns that, as in Panama, the elections might be nullified. The next morning, Ortega conceded defeat and promised to support a peaceful transition.

**Bulgaria.** The June 1990 Bulgarian elections exemplify how a PVT can help to convince a disappointed opposition to accept an unexpected ruling-party victory.<sup>6</sup> Drawing upon the experiences of the Philippines, Chile, and Panama, civic activists formed the Bulgarian Association for Fair Elections (BAFE) in April 1990. In the six weeks before the elections, BAFE trained more than 10,000 volunteers to serve as pollwatchers. BAFE's successful PVT gathered results from 1,300 of Bulgaria's 12,000 or so polling sites and transmitted them expeditiously to BAFE headquarters in Sofia.

In order to carry out its PVT, BAFE had to overcome considerable government suspicion. On the eve of the elections, for example, the Central Election Commission (CEC) sought to bar the release of results from PVTs until after official counts were released. With the experiences of Panama, Chile, and Nicaragua in mind, the international observers immediately protested the CEC action. The CEC relented and agreed that there would be no ban on the timing of the release of PVT results.

By midnight, the BAFE quick count and a quick count performed by a West German polling organization both showed a victory by the ex-communist Bulgarian Socialist Party. Because BAFE was staffed by individuals with no ties to the government, opposition leaders accepted the results and began planning for the next election.

The BAFE quick count, however, did not dispel all suspicion. Various conspiracy theories spread, including one involving an alleged half-million "phantom voters." Thus as the October 1991 legislative elections approached, observers took care to ensure that proper mechanisms were in place to verify the vote count. In the event, PVTs conducted by political parties and independent organizations revealed a narrow victory by opposition forces several days before the CEC released final results confirming such an outcome.<sup>7</sup>

**Haiti.** Building upon their experiences in Nicaragua, the UN and the OAS jointly implemented a parallel vote tabulation for the Haitian presidential election of 16 December 1990.<sup>8</sup> Slightly more than 1 percent

of the polling sites were included in the sample. The small size of the sample caused some concern, but was justified in terms of the modest goals of the PVT. The vote count sought to determine whether any presidential candidate had obtained the 50-percent majority needed to avoid a runoff and, assuming a runoff was necessary, to determine which two candidates had won the most votes.

A sophisticated radio network permitted the two organizations to offer the Provisional Electoral Commission a projection of the presidential election results shortly after midnight on election night. The following day, given the PVT's indication that Jean-Bertrand Aristide had won in a landslide, the Commission confidently made public partial results of the official count, rather than waiting until all the results were centrally collected, as originally intended.

The significance of the PVT in Haiti was twofold. First, there were considerable delays in the collection and tabulation of official results, which were ultimately released eight days after the elections; the early recognition of Aristide's victory helped reduce tensions that otherwise might have surfaced. Second, according to the UN report on the elections, approximately 25 percent of the ballots cast were never counted due to various administrative and logistical problems; without the PVT's confirmation of Aristide's overwhelming victory, this serious flaw in the process might have provided a basis for nullifying the elections.

**Zambia.** The presidential and legislative elections of 31 October 1991 were the first multiparty elections in Zambia in more than 18 years.<sup>9</sup> Kenneth Kaunda, who had served as president since Zambia achieved independence in 1964, was running for reelection as the nominee of the ruling party. Frederick Chiluba of the Movement for Multiparty Democracy was the challenger. Given the long period of one-party rule and the government's control of state resources, the opposition was fearful that the ruling party would attempt to manipulate the process, particularly the vote count. The decision to count the ballots at regional counting centers, although it reflected longstanding Zambian practice, further exacerbated concerns that tampering might occur between polling places and regional counting centers.

In order to instill confidence and deter fraud, an international nongovernmental observer delegation organized a PVT. This effort relied on a network of Zambians recruited from various civic organizations that were monitoring the elections. The sample included 350 randomly selected polling sites. Because ballot boxes were counted at regional centers, the operation was not designed to provide a quick count. Moreover, as a result of government objections, the observers agreed not to release results of the PVT until after President Carter, who was again leading an international observer delegation, consulted with the Electoral Commission and the two major political parties.

Notwithstanding the limitations mentioned above, the PVT provided early evidence that Chiluba had won overwhelmingly. President Kaunda graciously conceded defeat, and Chiluba was inaugurated as Zambia's new president within 36 hours of the closing of the polls and even before all the votes had been tabulated.

**Pakistan.** A credible quick count is not always possible: single-member constituencies may preclude reliance on statistical sampling, or else monitoring organizations may lack the necessary resources to implement a comprehensive count. Both of these factors affected the possibility of a credible PVT in Pakistan at the time of the 1988 and 1990 elections, where there were 216 separate elections to the National Assembly and more than 33,000 polling sites.

In lieu of a PVT, the principal international observer delegations to both the 1988 and 1990 Pakistani legislative elections relied on a method of statistical analysis that compared election results from a prior election on a constituency-by-constituency basis. In 1988, the analysis focused on the allegations of the opposition Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) that voter turnout was intentionally held down in areas where PPP candidates were competing. The analysis showed that the significantly lower turnout in 1988 as compared to 1985 did not disproportionately affect any one political party.

The 1990 elections proved even more controversial, as the PPP claimed that massive fraud was being committed throughout the country. The observers' statistical analysis uncovered anomalies in 15 percent of the 216 constituencies, yet as their report states: "a statistical analysis cannot conclusively establish the occurrence of fraud or the probable victor of a constituency where statistical anomalies exist."<sup>10</sup> Indeed, as the report notes, the anomalies may have been the result of political developments within constituencies rather than any fraud or manipulation.

## **A Guide for Practitioners**

PVTs appear complex, time-consuming, and costly. This impression may be misleading; such operations, depending on their specific goals and the methodology utilized, are usually relatively simple to implement and, in addition to verifying official results, serve to enhance the capabilities of organizations engaged in monitoring activities. This section provides an abbreviated guide to organizing a PVT operation.

The first step is to choose the best type of PVT system for the task at hand. The election system, the resources available (including demographic and electoral data), and the goals of the operation must all be taken into account.<sup>11</sup> Once an approach is selected, the sponsors must develop a plan of action that sets up various functional groups, provides for the recruitment of volunteers, and includes a timetable and budget.

The functional teams should include: data processing, statistical analysis, volunteer training, logistics, publicity, and general administration. Recruiting expert volunteers—including specialists in demography, statistics, computers, and communication networks—is crucial for the success of the operation. Identifying the appropriate persons to coordinate the overall operation is also essential.

In cases where sampling techniques are used, the size of the sample must be determined. Because there usually is limited relevant electoral history in transition situations, the tendency has been to use rather large samples (often constituting 10 percent of the total polling sites) and to rely on a high degree of randomness. However, stratification principles also might be relied upon to reduce the sample's overall margin of error and to permit early projections where only some of the sample points have reported. Polling sites have been stratified according to administrative region, demographic characteristics (e.g., urban, semi-urban, rural), socioeconomic status, and gender (this last is important where men and women vote at separate polling sites, as in Chile).

Computer capabilities are essential to draw the sample, to record the results, and to project the outcome, particularly in cases where all sampling points have not reported. If feasible, computers should be distributed to different locations throughout the country to expedite the processing of results. From the regional sites, information can be transmitted to the central headquarters by modem or computer disc.

Communications considerations also play a major role in the development of a PVT plan. The presence of a suitably large and secure nationwide telephone network is a huge boon. Alternatives to reliance on the telephone include radios, which require the installation of considerable infrastructure, and the physical delivery of results to regional and national headquarters, which slows the operation considerably.

The PVT plan should be explained to government and election officials, the news media, and political party leaders at the earliest opportunity. The cooperation of election officials is often necessary to ensure that a PVT is feasible. For example, a special regulation may be required to permit PVT volunteers to be inside polling sites during the vote-counting process or to obtain an official tally sheet. If such permission is not forthcoming, arrangements may have to be made with one or more political parties whose agents have access to the polling sites.

Those who first broach the idea of a PVT should expect some hostile criticism. Election officials may view such an effort as an arrogation of their responsibilities and as a potential source of confusion to voters. A serious attempt must be made to convince election officials, and also in most instances the ruling party, that implementation of a credible PVT is in everyone's interest. The 1990 Bulgarian elections demonstrate the utility of a PVT to an election commission whose integrity is under

question and to a ruling party that believes it will win. Similarly, the example of the 1990 Haitian elections may encourage election officials to accept the usefulness of a PVT when administrative deficiencies delay the release of official results.

In some cases, election officials have sought to limit the effectiveness of the PVT by restricting access to the polling site during the counting process, by requiring that polling-site results be verified by a designated official prior to inclusion in the PVT, or by proscribing release of information until election officials have been consulted or until the official results are released. The sponsors of the PVT must gauge the impact of a proposed limitation on the overall goals of the operation before determining whether to proceed. In several instances, proposed restrictions were withdrawn once the benefits of the proposed operation were understood by all concerned. International observers have played an important role in convincing governments and election officials to permit PVTs to proceed with minimal restrictions.

To enhance the credibility of a PVT and to overcome suspicions that it is serving partisan purposes, religious leaders and prominent international observers may need to become directly involved in certain aspects of the operation. For example, the list of polling sites included in a sample may be deposited before an election with a prominent religious figure to avoid allegations that the sample was drawn after the polls opened. Similarly, international observers may be invited to monitor the receipt of polling-site results at the central headquarters of the PVT operation to ensure that all the information is recorded accurately and without delay.

Absent extraordinary circumstances, the organizers of a PVT should stick to their announced plans for the release of results on election night. The perception that results are being released for strategic purposes rather than in accordance with declared intentions may jeopardize the credibility of the entire operation.

Finally, the organizers of a PVT should prepare for different scenarios on election night. Often, private communication of the PVT results to key government or ruling party officials will squelch any thoughts of rigging the results and will encourage the expeditious release of accurate official results. If fraud is attempted or delays in the release of results appear inordinate and unwarranted, however, pressure will mount to publicize the results of a PVT, even in the face of a regulation proscribing their release. Under such circumstances, withholding the results of the PVT might be politically and morally untenable.

The monitoring of vote counts as part of an overall election-observation effort can boost the confidence of voters suspicious of possible fraud, permit results to be projected more quickly than the official results, and allow for the identification of actual winners and the consequent exposure of any attempted manipulations. By contrast, failure

to implement or utilize a PVT, or to develop some other mechanism for effectively monitoring the vote count, may fatally harm the legitimacy of an entire election cycle. PVT efforts are particularly essential to the success of elections occurring in transitions to democracy or in other circumstances where confidence in the integrity of the election process is in question.

## NOTES

1. In most parallel vote tabulations, confidence levels of 95 percent are used. This means that, in 95 percent of the cases, the results would be as projected by the sample. The margin of error accounts for deviations from the projected result that can be expected at given confidence levels. By using large and stratified samples, the margin of error can be reduced to a quite small number, often less than plus or minus one percentage point.

2. See generally, National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, *Reforming the Philippine Electoral Process: Developments 1986-1988* (Washington, D.C., 1989; reissued 1991), and National Democratic Institute for International Affairs and National Republican Institute for International Affairs, *A Path to Democratic Renewal: A Report on the February 7 Presidential Election in the Philippines* (Washington, D.C., 1986).

3. See generally, National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, *Chile's Transition to Democracy: The 1988 Presidential Plebiscite* (Washington, D.C., 1989).

4. See generally, National Republican Institute for International Affairs and National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, *The May 7, 1989 Panamanian Elections* (Washington, D.C., 1989).

5. For a text of the OAS Resolution adopted on 17 May 1989, see *ibid.*, 123-24.

6. National Democratic Institute for International Affairs and National Republican Institute for International Affairs, *The June 1990 Elections in Bulgaria* (Washington, D.C., 1990).

7. National Democratic Institute for International Affairs and International Republican Institute, *The October 13, 1991 Legislative and Municipal Elections in Bulgaria* (Washington, D.C., 1991).

8. See generally, Note by the Secretary General, *Electoral Assistance to Haiti*, UN Document A/45/870/ADD.1, 11-17 (February 1991); Council of Freely-Elected Heads of Government and National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, *The 1990 General Elections In Haiti* (Washington, D.C., 1991), 59-61.

9. See generally, Carter Center of Emory University and National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, *The October 31 National Elections In Zambia* (Washington, D.C., 1992), 66-69.

10. National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, *The October 1990 Elections in Pakistan* (Washington, D.C., 1991), 107.

11. The necessary information would include a list of all polling sites and their locations, the number of registered voters per polling site, and the number of registered voters in each district or constituency. In the context of a first election, the difficulty in obtaining such basic information should not be underestimated. National election commissions in several countries have been unable to relate with precision the authorized number of polling sites or the total number of registered voters prior to election day.