MEXICAN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION FORUM AT STANFORD TO EXAMINE FUTURE OF DEMOCRACY

STANFORD -- Mexico will define its future in July 2006 with a key presidential election, a topic that will be debated by top Mexican historians, politicians and members of the Mexican media on Saturday, March 11. The event, which is free and open to the public, will be held at Kresge Auditorium on the Stanford University campus beginning at 8:45 a.m. The event will be conducted in Spanish with simultaneous English translation.

The upcoming presidential election in Mexico will be the first since PAN (National Action Party) candidate Vicente Fox defeated the ruling PRI (Revolutionary Institutional Party) regime in 2000, which had been in power for 71 years.

Polls show the center-left PRD (Democratic Revolution Party) candidate Andrés Manuel López Obrador out front, followed by Felipe Calderón from the center-right PAN, and the center’s Roberto Madrazo of the PRI.

The event, “2006 Mexican Presidential Elections: A Challenge for Democracy,” asks scholars, intellectuals, electoral authorities, media representatives and the main political parties to reflect what will be the immediate future of Mexico.

Among the questions they will tackle: Is Mexico ready to continue down the path to democracy? Will Mexico join other Latin American countries in a shift to left? How might this change Mexico-U.S. relations? Will the media be independent and fair in its coverage of the presidential campaigns?

The forum will also discuss the problems faced by Mexican immigrants attempting to vote using absentee ballots for the first time in Mexican presidential elections.

Larry Diamond, Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University and Coordinator of the Democracy Program at the Center on Democracy, Development and the Rule of Law at the Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies, will open the event.

The keynote address will be given by Mexican historian Enrique Krauze, Director of the magazine Letras Libres, a renowned analyst of contemporary Mexico.


The afternoon roundtable, “The Electoral Agenda of the Political Parties,” will include representatives of the three main political parties in Mexico, who will present campaign strategies and reflections on Mexico’s future. The parties’ representatives are the General Secretary of PRI, Rosario Green, Saul Escobar of the PRD, and Senator Hector Larios from the PAN.
The event is being sponsored by Mexicanos at Stanford, the John S. Knight Fellowships for Professional Journalists, the Charles F. Riddell Fund - Yost House, Center on Democracy, Development and the Rule of Law, Center for Latin American Studies, Bechtel International Center, El Guiding Concilio - El Centro Chicano, Camacho Fund, ASSU Speakers Bureau, and United Airlines.

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