FROM URIBISMO TO UNIDAD NACIONAL

COLOMBIA AFTER THE CONGRESSIONAL AND PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

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By having a referendum in the spring, President Alvaro Uribe had hoped to enable himself to be re-elected once again. The resulting dispute has marked political developments in Colombia since late 2008, as there was hardly any discussion of practical politics. According to national estimates, there was little doubt that Uribe would be elected by a vast majority in the first round of elections. He had been in office since 2002, and his new candidacy dangled like a sword of Damocles over every party's strategic considerations for selecting candidates. At the end of February 2010, the constitutional court declared the re-election referendum unconstitutional due to statutory offenses and constitutional reasons. This created a clear new starting point just under two weeks before the congressional elections for the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate on March 14, particularly so for the presidential elections on May 30, of course. The path was cleared for the post-Uribe era.

THE CONGRESSIONAL ELECTIONS – PRELUDE TO CONTINUITY

The congressional elections on March 14 became the first test of power in while Uribe was still in office. Although no longer a future presidential candidate, he was however a political factor not to be underestimated, and yet impossible to accurately assess. The decisive question was whether an "Uribismo without Uribe" could win the majority or if the imminent end of the Uribe era might unexpectedly propel the opposition forward.

The results were clear. The two largest parties of the former Uribe coalition, the Uribe Party *Partido Social de Unidad Nacional*, known as "la U," and the conservative party (PCC) won 50 of the 102 Senate seats and 81 of the 166 Chamber of Deputies seats. However, because of a chaotic counting procedure on the night of the election and numerous challenges, the official count has not yet been concluded, and as such, the following tables do not represent final official results.[1]

Table 1
**Election results for the Senate:
A comparison of the 2010 and 2006
congressional elections[2]**

Party	2010 Congressional Elections[3]			2006 Congressional Elections		
	Votes	%	Seats[4]	Votes	%	Seats
Partido Social de Unidad Nacional	2,804,123	25.17	28	1,642,256	17.49	20 (29)
Partido Conservador	2,298,748	20.63	22	1,514,960	16.13	18 (22)
Partido Liberal	1,763,908	15.83	17	1,457,322	15.52	17
Cambio Radical	888,851	7.98	8	1,254,294	13.36	15 (12)
Polo Democrático Alternativo	848,905	7.62	8	914,964	9.74	11
Partido de Inte- gración Nacional	907,468	8.14	9	—	—	—
Partido Verde	531,293	4.77	5	—	—	—

1 | This report was completed on July 4, 2010.
2 | Results based on information from the Registraduría Nacional dated March 16, 2010 (compilation and comparison to 2006 made by author using official data as far as possible). The strongest parties are listed.
3 | Data based on count of 93.27 percent of the votes.
4 | The remaining five seats go to MIRA (2), Compromiso Ciudadano (1) and two more to indigenous representatives.

Table 2
**Election results for the Chamber of Deputies:
A comparison of the 2010 and 2006
congressional elections**

Party	2010 Congressional Elections[5]			2006 Congressional Elections		
	Votes	**%**	**Seats**	**Votes**	**%**	**Seats**
Partido Social de Unidad Nacional	2,230,914	25.42	45	1,244,835	n/a	29 (40)
Partido Conservador	1,886,965	21.50	36	1,297,787	n/a	29 (33)
Partido Liberal	1,616,208	18.41	35	1,505,950	n/a	35
Cambio Radical	669,830	7.63	12	824,073	n/a	21 (17)
Polo Democrático Alternativo	482,685	5.49	4	442,607	n/a	7
Partido de Inte-gración Nacional	506,139	5.76	12	—	—	—
Partido Verde	265,593	3.02	3	—	—	—

These elections were not interpreted as preliminary presidential elections, as the predominant local, regional and personal impressions of the candidates for these congressional elections are too strong. The results were primarily seen as much more of a vote for Uribe and his politics, and not as a direct vote for Santos, the former Defense Minister and presidential candidate of "la U." Nevertheless, it was thus apparent that a "Uribismo without Uribe" could win the majority. For Santos, these election results meant a strengthening of his position in the ranks of "la U" and a strong boost among voters. People were now confident he would win.[6] Just a few days before the congressional elections, he had to allow members of his own coalition publicly give him fanciful suggestions to improve his chances for election.

The "green wave" phenomenon came in April. The Partido Verde's candidate, Antanas Mockus, shot up the polls.

5 | Data based on count of 88.71 percent of the votes.
6 | For a detailed analysis of the congressional elections, see the country report dated March 17 ("Kolumbien hat gewählt"): http://www.kas.de/wf/doc/kas_19085-544-1-30.pdf (accessed July 4, 2010).

THE FIRST ROUND – WINNING AT THE BALLOT BOX

After the conservative party and the *Partido Verde* (green party) had chosen their top candidates in "consultas populares," a sort of public primary elections, the panel of candidates was locked in for the first round of presidential elections on May 30[7]. Apart from Santos from "la U," there was a total of five other candidates to be taken seriously: Rafael Pardo for the liberals (PL), Gustavo Petro for the leftist alliance *Polo*, Germán Vargas Lleras for the *Cambio Radical* (CR), Noemi Sanín for the conservative party (PCC) and Antanas Mockus for the *Partido Verde* (PV).

For weeks, Santos and Sanín held the two leading positions in the polls. After Sanín was just barely able to win a bitter face-off in the conservative party primaries, this seemed to be the PCC's first chance since Pastranas's presidency (1998-2002) to seriously join in on the fight for the presidency once again. However, the neck-and-neck race between Santos and Sanín only lasted until early April.

Then came the "green wave" phenomenon. The *Partido Verde's* candidate, Antanas Mockus, shot up the polls. Mockus, former mayor of Bogotá, had joined forces with former counterparts from very different political backgrounds and used the PV as a political platform for his candidacy.

Mockus profited from several factors. The main issues of his campaign – fighting corruption, budgetary integrity, respecting institutions, a deliberative style of politics – rightly hit many a nerve in the Colombian understanding of politics and in traditional policy. The message of a change in style and policy yielded results, especially thanks to the first certifiable use on this massive of a scale of new social networks in Colombia via Facebook and Twitter, in particular by first-time and young voters known as "primivotos," but it was also thanks to significant support from editorialists and political commentators.

Mockus is considered to be authoritarian and shows no sign of being afraid to touch the topic of democratic security. At the same time, those from the left are attributing certain positive characteristics to him.

7 | The liberal party and the *Polo* had already nominated their candidates in September 2009, also though "consultas populares."

For a fairly long time, Mockus's strength as a candidate lied in his ability to bring the incompatible together and to turn weaknesses into strengths. Mockus is more commonly associated with a "conservative agenda." As president of the Universidad Nacional, he led with as hard a hand as he did over Bogotá as mayor. The *Partido Verde* was the first party to place urban security on the agenda. Mockus is considered to be authoritarian and shows no sign of being afraid to touch the topic of democratic security. According to Mockus, "If I were the FARC, I would run to Uribe and negotiate, because what is coming after Uribe will be even worse for them." At the same time, those from the left are attributing certain positive characteristics to him. That is why Mockus is still considered an outsider or an independent despite his political career up until now. He brought all the antis together and gained access to traditional abstainers.

For a considerable stretch of his campaign, Mockus initially proved to be the "Teflon candidate." He seemed to be forgiven for everything: contradictions, being uninformed, and philosophically convoluted, thereby incomprehensible statements. The fact that he had admitted to suffering Parkinson's benefited him. It was not until the end of his campaign that increasing doubt spread as to whether the electorate might eventually be scared off by the improbability of his election given his clear weaknesses.

Santos depersonalized the election that had been focused on him up until then, cast the spotlight on "la U" as a party and accentuated the idea of continuity from Uribe's government.

The election campaign was marked by a considerably smaller amount of polarization than expected. Interestingly enough, there were more polarizations among like-minded political forces. For example, there was some mud-slinging between the *Partido Verde* and the *Polo* caused by the potential for power in *Polo* represented by Mockus and due to insufficient dissociation from the guerilla organization FARC by several segments of *Polo*. Sanín, on the other hand, seemed at times to view Santos as her preferred political opponent.

Overall, the campaign progressed with an increasing focus on the issues, which may have in no small way been fueled by a plethora of television face-offs between the

candidates. However, there was no one prevailing topic. This included the democratic security policy, the trademark of Uribe's eight years in office.

Santos was able to state that he had a better grasp of social problems and problems that transcend the democratic security policy than he had been credited with. Santos's change of strategy during this phase of the campaign should be noted. He depersonalized the election that had been focused on him up until then, cast the spotlight on "la U" as a party, forced his electoral campaign to be more regional and more strongly accentuated the idea of continuity from Uribe's government.

However, he did not leave it at that. Rather, he set his own priorities, at time cautiously. Surprisingly, Santos called for a government of *Unidad Nacional* (national unity) that would include all the parties in order to tackle the central problem areas of Colombian politics.

The *Unidad Nacional* program encompasses the following political areas:

1. Employment: Commensurate jobs and wages. At least one member of each family should have formal employment. Social dialog among employees, employers and the government. Reduction of poverty and unemployment rates.
2. Democratic prosperity for all: Health and high-caliber education in private life as well as well as a job, dignified living conditions and income opportunities.
3. Democratic security policy: Consolidating this policy and increasing security in cities on the foundation of the constitution and respect for human rights. Fighting terrorism.
4. Transparency and no corruption: Ethical principles in force for public matters; a culture of legality and intolerance of corruption, both in the private and the public sectors.
5. Good governance: Excellent, objective, efficient, decentralized, participatory and responsible public administration at all levels. Collaboration with local leadership to promote regional development.
6. Democratic institutionality: Strengthening the democratic state with independence, balance and harmonious collaboration among powers.

7. Justice and no impunity: Strengthening the rule of law through a strict approach against impunity and through direct, efficient justice. Guaranteeing access to justice for society and individuals. Defending the rights of victims using the principles of truth, justice and restitution.

8. Urban and rural agenda: Improving living conditions in cities through mobility, living space, public spaces and services provided for all. Prosperous and secure rural regions to ensure universal, legal and sustainable cultivation of arable land (Colombia as a food pantry for the world).

9. Environment: Sustainable use of environmental potential. Defense of water as a vital resource. Positioning Colombia as a "biodiversity power" at the global level.

10. International Relations: Strengthen Colombia's position in the world order and creating closer ties to neighbor states on the basis of respect and cooperation. Colombia's political leaders should be recognized on the international stage.

With this program and the announcement of *Unidad Nacional*, Santos was able to convincingly state that despite any continuity from Uribe's government, he had a better grasp of social problems and problems that transcend the democratic security policy than he had been credited with. This was also the effect of his nomination of trade unionist Angelino Garzón, originally from the communist party, as candidate for the office of Vice President, controversial within even his own party.

Once again, a norm of Colombian political culture was confirmed: congressional election results do not carry over into presidential elections.

The presidential run-off tapered off to a neck-and-neck race between Santos and Mockus. As Mockus took the lead from Santos in some polls, Sanín landed in a distant third place starting in early April. None of the other candidates were expected to put up a serious fight either. In the end, the results of the first round on May 30 were surprising in many respects.

Table 3
Results of the first round compared to the congressional elections

Candidate (Party)	May 30, 2010 Presidential Elections[8]		March 14, 2010 Congressional Elections[9]	
	Votes	%	Votes	%
Santos (Partido de la U)	6,758,539	46.56	2,804,123	25.17
Mockus (Partido Verde)	3,120,716	21.49	531,293	8.14
Vargas Lleras (Cambio Radical)	1,471,377	10.13	888,851	7.98
Petro (Polo Democrático)	1,329,512	9.15	848,905	7.62
Sanín (Partido Conservador)	892,323	6.14	2,298,748	20.63
Pardo (Partido Liberal)	636,624	4.38	1,763,908	15.83
Calderon (Apertura Liberal)	33,924	0.23	95,157	n/a
Devia (La Voz de la Consciencia)	32,080	0.22	—	—
Araujo (Alianza Social Afrocolombiana)	15,701	0.10	11,767	n/a

Once again, a norm of Colombian political culture was confirmed: congressional election results do not carry over into presidential elections. Voters feel much freer in the presidential elections than in the congressional and even regional and municipal elections, where local and labor structures have a stronger impact.

Santos went to a candidate of desired continuity. This also shows that the often sworn, irreconcilable divide in Colombian society of pro- and anti-Uribe primarily pertains to the political class.

Santos's results were higher than had been expected. This shows even more so than the congressional elections that "Uribismo after Uribe" is significantly stronger than expected. Santos was better able to use the positive potential from Uribe's government and Uribe's own high regard for Santos's "continuity candidacy" than could be expected from the polls, and he was also able to take less of the brunt than expected for the shortcomings that existed in Uribe's government as well.

8 | Based on 99.7 percent of voting stations.
9 | Final official results have not yet been confirmed.

Santos went from being a candidate with a limited if not potentially threatening legacy to a candidate of desired continuity. This also shows that the often sworn, irreconcilable divide in Colombian society of pro- and anti-Uribe primarily pertains to the political class, whereas the general population has high regard for Uribe and his government's legacy.

Although simply adding the results has limited meaning politically speaking, Vargas Lleras's and Noemi Sanín's results can also be attributed to "Uribismo." This implies roughly 9.1 of 14.3 million votes. Both parties, *Cambio Radical* (CR) and *Partido Conservador Colombiano* (PCC) were supporting members of Uribe's government. It comes as no surprise, then, that on the night of the elections, Santos immediately invited PCC and CR to be partners in his government.

Mockus achieved substantial results, despite being considerably behind the poll predictions, and this placed him in the run-off election. The "green wave" did not turn into a "green tsunami" as had been speculated in the days leading up to the elections. These are "his" results and they should not be interpreted as the *Partido Verde's* results. The green party served as a political vehicle

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for Mockus's candidacy. He, and not the party, was the central "message" upon which many projected their highly heterogeneous visions and expectations. The reasons behind his significantly worse performance as compared to the polls are numerous. There has also been no small number of references to this difference. It became clear that Mockus and the rise of the "green wave" resulted more than expected from the "voto de opinion," an "opinion phenomenon" that ran out of steam in the home stretch. This obviously led to a "rationalization of voting behavior" that saw a Mockus victory as a "leap into a void and the unknown" (*salto al vacío*) and was scared off at the end of the day.

Apart from Santos, the surprises of the first round of elections were largely Vargas Lleras and Gustavo Petro, who have both fared far better than in the polls and even in the congressional elections. Vargas Lleras was able to

increasingly project an image of himself as a programmatic candidate, landing him just ahead of Petro in third place. On the other hand, Petro can consider his modernization plan of a center-left option as being confirmed by the readiness to form a coalition. It is yet to be seen if this will lead to a splintering of the *Polo*, the parting of ways of the fundamentalist sectors and a resulting option for restructuring the party lines of the moderate left. In any case, both Vargas Lleras and Petro have underpinned their plans for the government structure and have taken a large step towards their aspirations for presidency.

Liberal Rafael Pardo was the candidate who had an upset beyond expectations. He landed far behind in sixth place with 4.38 percent, just under the limit needed to for the party to receive reimbursement for the cost of the election campaign. Even if little had been expected, these election results were a dramatic setback after the success of the congressional elections. The *Partido Liberal* (PL) was confronted with the prospect of being excluded from those in power for another four years, a total of 16, or having to switch into the Santos camp. With this in mind, Santos's election night emphasis on his liberal camp origins is understandable.

Sanín's platform was unable to develop a pro- or anti-Uribe stance. This led Uribista PCC voters to turn directly to Santos.

The conservative party (PCC) is in shambles: just under six percent of the votes were for Sanín at fifth place out of the six serious candidates. With Sanín as their candidate, PCC had hoped to achieve their ambitions for political leadership and at the very least, to manifest their independent "will to power." In the last phase of the electoral campaign, the PCC hoped for a "votación decente", or a "decent vote" set at roughly 2 million votes. They fell short of both goals. Now, the PCC is looking at election results that go beyond their worst fears. Compared to the congressional elections, the party lost 1.3 million votes, and compared to the "consulta popular" for selecting a presidential candidate, they even lost roughly 1.6 million votes. As a candidate, Sanín was not even able to obtain her roughly 1.1 million votes from the primary elections. Even in the bastions of the PCC such as Antioquia, she came in with just over nine percent.

There are numerous reasons for these election results. On the one hand, Sanín was unable to convey that the PCC was completely behind her. The bitter battle over the party's top candidate had left deep wounds. Elements of the party may have accepted the last-minute truce, but not fully devoted themselves to participating in the electoral campaign. In the long run, Sanín's platform was unable to develop a pro- or anti-Uribe stance perceived as being authentic. This led Uribista PCC voters to turn directly to Santos, in no small way thanks to Sanín's attacks on Santos, whereas independent voters switched to Mockus. It was these voters that would have been decisive for a Sanín victory in the "consulta popular."

The true losers on election night were the polling institutes. As yet, there is no plausible explanation for the way all the institutes' predictions could be so far off from the actual election results.

"TOCOSAN" – ON THE PATH TO THE SECOND ROUND

The three weeks before the second round of elections on June 20, 2010 were nothing more than a formality. No one else doubted that Santos would win, the question was now was simply: by how much? Against this backdrop, calls were made for a reform to electoral law following the Argentine example.[10]

In the eyes of well-minded observers, if Mockus had ever had a serious chance at being a threat to Santos in the second round, he lost it on election night on May 30. He combined singing and fundamentalist messages in a way reminiscent of a hotel animator. For many, his erratic performance was the finale for a campaign that could no longer be won.

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The election campaign itself provided no further highlights of note. Santos was able to further market himself as a superior candidate, whereas the weaknesses of his opponent, Mockus, had become apparent in the weeks prior, marking a distinct contrast.

10 | According to Argentine electoral law, a candidate is elected if chosen by over 40 percent of the votes with at least 10 percentage points more than the next runner-up.

The fact that the election results left no room for doubt could be attributed to the new meaning that the promised formula "tocosan" had taken on over the weeks. This term sprung up during the phase when, according to polls, Santos and Sanín would proceed to the second round, and given the lineup, the opposition parties would rally behind Sanín to prevent Santos's election: *Todos contra Santos* – "everyone against Santos." After Santos's startling results in the first round and his remarkably serious call for *Unidad Nacional*, there was a new lineup of "Todos con Santos" – "everyone with Santos."

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The conservative party along with the vast majority of the liberal party and their members joined Santos. Cambio Radical followed shortly thereafter. In contrast, Mockus declined the offer to form a coalition with *Polo* and went on to the second election round with no formal support. With this in mind, the results for the May 30 election came as no surprise. Even the polling institutions fared well with their predictions.

Table 4
Results of the first and second round of presidential elections

Candidate (Party)	2nd Ballot of Presidential Elections on June 20, 2010		1st Ballot of Presidential Elections on May 30, 2010	
	Results (Number of Votes)	Results (in %)	Results (Number of Votes)	Results (in %)
Santos (Partido de la U)	9,004,221	69.05	6,758,539	46.56
Mockus (Partido Verde)	3,588,819	27.52	3,120,716	21.49

ASSESSMENT OF ELECTION RESULTS

It is, of course, premature to try to form any clear findings a few weeks after the elections given the new, and in many ways fluctuating political context.

Nevertheless, some initial conclusions and remarks can be made regarding possible future trends.

1. In many ways, Santos was poorly estimated. This is true of his own abilities as a campaigner. During his campaign, Santos started off cautious, but was quick to change his strategy, gained notably in stature and despite his connection to Uribe's government, was not perceived as a frontman controlled from afar in the presidential palace.

    Santos successfully presented himself as the candidate for continuity from the Uribe era and politically capitalized on Uribe's good legacy without being held responsible for the negative perception of Uribe's government, as some had long feared or hoped. He was able to convincingly express his own approaches. His breadth of issues and sensibility prevented him from being perceived as a candidate narrowly focused on the democratic security policy. His call for a government of *Unidad Nacional* and the ten-point program, broad though they may be, played an important part in his success.

    Santos' government has over 85 percent of the seats in the new Congress. In this context, the problem of governability may not arise for Santos at first.

2. After the clear results of the first round, there were also sentiments that all the other candidates should withdraw their candidacy to allow Santos to take office without a second round. Now, Santos is better served by the results of the second round than by those of the first. The referendum nature of the second round of elections allowed him extensive latitude and independence, which he also voiced in his speech on the June 20 election night.

3. The Santos government has over 85 percent of the seats in the new Congress. The "de la U" party and the conservative party combined are close to having an absolute majority in the Chamber of Deputies and in the Senate. In this context, the problem of governability (*gobernabilidad*) may not arise for Santos at first. However, the heterogeneousness of this coalition should not be underestimated. In addition, the individual coalition parties have not signed a joint comprehensive coalition contract; their alliances with Santos have each been effected on a bilateral level. At first, this eased the conclusion of each agreement,

but in the long run, this will involve a wide variety of points of contention. These points concern the division of power among parties, the "bureaucratic quota," but also questions related to content and inevitable compromises. As one conservative politician put it: "We are doing well where we stand, but there are too many of us."

For a long while, Santos has a huge strategic advantage in this crowded state. First, in the form of his election results. But also because of the breadth of the *Unidad Nacional* alliance, which makes each

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individual partner separately disposable. The potential threat of terminating the coalition is thereby likely to be small in the foreseeable future. If Santos is able to win post-election acceptance from the public in the first months because of certain decisions, conduct and a political style focused more strongly on consensus, he will be able to hold the *Unidad Nacional* together in the foreseeable future. The prospects for this are good.

4. In this context, the deciding factor will be how Santos puts his concept for the institutions into practice. His commitment to the division of powers and particularly to an independent judicial branch has a very solid history. The tense, even conflictive relationship between President Uribe and certain jurisdictions led to a "choque de trenes," a "train crash," with problematic implications. That is why his selection for the highest attorney general has awaited confirmation for over a year.

    Immediately after his selection, Santos met with all the presidents of the different high courts in the country. This appeared to pave the way for a fairly conflict-free relationship between the President and the judicial branch.

5. The *Unidad Nacional* project should not be misinterpreted as just a short-lived campaign slogan. This call should be understood as an appeal to society and the political elite. Santos has turned words into actions. This is true of the agreements with several parties,

the sheer willingness to cooperate with the *Polo* and the *Partido Verde*. Yet this can also be drawn from his declarations on his government's structure. That is why a number of minis- tries that had been consolidated under Uribe have been reinstated. Among other things, Santos has announced the creation of an independent ministry for justice and the environment. The social services sector is also to be integrated into different ministries.

Aside from the fact that by creating these new minis- tries he of course provides himself with more govern- ment positions to fill, it also makes it apparent that Santos wants to pursue key issues and to live up to the obligations he entered into during the electoral campaign and through his agreements.

As yet, it is unclear whether *Unidad Nacional* will develop into a government without opposition. The parties belonging to the opposition are mainly compri- sed of the *Polo* and the *Partido Verde*. It remains to be seen whether *Polo* will be able to maintain party-wide parliamentary action and if so, to what extent. The *Partido Verde*, however, has no significant experience in parliament. What is more, Mockus has a difficult time uttering the word "opposition." He has not ruled out supporting the government if it pursues the appro- priate issues.

Unidad Nacional's ten-point program is easy to sign given its general nature, but it is as yet unclear what precise lines the future President will pursue in particular and how he will manage to compromise on the different interests of the various coalition parties.

In the medium term, the possibility that the opposition itself may result from the *Unidad Nacional* concept should not be ruled out. First and foremost, it does not seem likely that party leaders such as Vargas Lleras will swear off their bids for the presidency for the next eight years simply because they belong to the *Unidad Nacional* and Santos's hopes for re-election are of higher importance.

6. Santos already made it clear on election night that he seriously takes the parties seriously as institutions, yet that does not mean that he will stick to traditional criteria for the delegation of political power. He stated that parties must be made aware of their serving character. Given the political-cultural traditions of Columbia, this was a major statement.

    The future President's first publicly-made choices for appointments, however, hint at the notion that Santos, instead of getting involved with discussions of quotas, is more interested in surrounding himself with renowned specialists. In certain cases, these may in fact have a history with a particular political party, but they are not necessarily among the influential politicians of their parties.

7. Even if the "green wave" did not wash Mockus up into the presidential palace, neither the other parties nor Santos should underestimate the message behind the success of a splinter party, unexpected only a few months ago. In fact, they should carefully analyze this success in its multi-faceted significance for Colombian politics and democracy. As heterogeneous and unclear as the predictions for Mockus were, this message voices a potential for protest that is willing to participate. It should be taken seriously and its supporters should not be lost from Colombian democracy.

    Santos's style of politics has been called less caudillo-like than Uribe's. Instead, it focuses more on institutions and consensus and delegates more.

8. Since even before Santos's victory, a favorite topic of speculation has been the question of how Uribista Santos is and if he will remain this way, as well as whether a dyad of "Santism vs. Uribism" will emerge.

At the crux of this speculation is the notion that Santos is or can become more than an extension of Uribe. His style of politics has been called less caudillo-like than Uribe's. Instead, it focuses more on institutions and consensus and delegates more. There is much evidence that Santos, building on the accomplishments of the Uribe era, will follow a line of *continuismo básico*, but will also set his own priorities.

In conclusion, the question of what impacts and challenges these presidential elections and the creation of *Unidad Nacional* will bring about for each party and the party system as a whole will be explored.

IMPACTS ON THE PARTIES

During a time where a Manuel Santos victory was not a given, some questioned whether the Uribe party "de la U" would have a chance at survival as an opposition party. As the strongest party in the government and the party of the President, the "la U" has a two-pronged challenge. On the one hand, it must readjust its focus as the presidential party. On the other, at a much lower and thus more challenging level, it must create sustainable, stable party structures. Even according to some member of Congress, as a party, the "la U" is more of a campaigning machine than a structured party.

The conservative party is facing very hard times. Starting with the fallout over the presidential candidate that split the party, and right up to Sanín's disastrous election results, reform within the party in recent months was drowned out by the second round and the coalition with Santos, but must not be too far off in the future. At this time, the forces and movements that will come into play here are unpredictable.

The PCC has become disposable. This fact should not be overshadowed by evoking the supporting role of the Uribe coalition.

The party needs to re-present itself. This will prove easier since it has a stronger presence in Congress and in the regions. But it will be more difficult as it has less weight within the framework of the *Unidad Nacional*. Even the PCC has become disposable. This fact should not be overshadowed by evoking the supporting role of the Uribe coalition. In the coming years, the PCC needs to lay the foundation for a credible claim to national leadership by strengthening its programmatic image both for the party and the fractions in the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate as well as by modernizing its party lines down to the regional level.

The Cambio Radical is by no means in an easy situation. This party is extremely focused on individuals and has similarly few party structures. As the smallest member of the coalition, it may be difficult for Cambio Radical to obtain government offices coalition. The question remains as to how much the party can shape its agenda. But most importantly, Vargas Lleras is undoubtedly one of the highest profile figures in the circle of the coalition politicians apart from Santos, and he will hardly give up on his ambitions for the presidency. It remains to be seen whether such a line-up can form part of the *Unidad Nacional*, and if so, for how long.

The liberal party (PL) was unable to join the *Unidad Nacional* unanimously. Some deputies and senators refused to take

Santos often emphasizes his liberal camp origins. It is debatable whether or not this reconvergence of the three liberal groups as "Unidad Nacional" can serve as the embryo for a new liberal formation.

that step. It is still unclear to what extent this will lead to officially crossing party lines to the PV or the *Polo*. The *Unidad Nacional* offers the PL the opportunity to participate in the government after many years of being in the opposition, even if it is in a limited form. For the time being, it is still unclear to what extent the heterogeneous factional movements – largely represented by two former liberal presidents, Gaviria and Samper – will see their interests materialized when it is time for the first compromises after the honeymoon with Santos.

In this context, another development not yet debated in Colombia should be noted. In contrast to Uribe, Santos often emphasizes his liberal camp origins. Santos thinks of the long term and of strategy much more than political observers believe him capable of. In one fell swoop, he has successfully brought together all three parties that are liberal or that originated in the liberal camp, the "la U," the PL and the CR under the umbrella of *Unidad Nacional*. It is debatable whether or not this reconvergence of the three liberal groups as *Unidad Nacional* can serve as the embryo for a new liberal formation.

Such a strategy could be more realistic for Santos than simply hoping for a form of cooperation with the conservative party that transcends coalition agreements. It is true that the conservative party already has a similar agenda, which if read conservatively, merely backs up the old

saying that a liberal is nothing more than an intelligent conservative. But even if there is a certain movement in the PCC that for all intents and purposes would be prepared to enter into another form of cooperation with the "la U," the party as a whole might not be ready to throw 160 years of its own history out the window.

The striking results for the *Polo* did not lead to an uncontested claim to power on the part of Petro. Rather, after the elections, when he announced his willingness to support Santos in the *Polo's* key political areas such as the land question, this led to official deauthorization and to speculation over party expulsion or a withdrawal.

The leftist alliance has split: On one side fundamentalist left cadre and on the other side a moderate movement set on cooperation and coalition.

Quite clearly, the leftist alliance has split: On one side we have the old, traditional fundamentalist left cadre whose actual amount of power is not always unquestionable and which prefers the role of the opposition given its need to have the absolute truth. And on the other side we have a moderate movement set on cooperation and coalition. The balance of power between these two movements is hard to ascertain, however.

It remains to be seen whether the inner-party split will also lead to smaller splintering or a party-wide division. This could result in a reformation of the radical left on the one side and some type of social democratic party along with the segments of the liberal party that reject the coalition with Santos on the other. This, in turn, could lead to another option for collaboration or fusion provided that the *Partido Verde* stabilizes.

Despite its name, the *Partido Verde* has very little to do with the "green movement." By nominating Mockus, who needed a secure platform to run for president, this splinter party was launched into an environment in which the conditions necessary for its political survival do not currently exist.

In an exceedingly good election night speech on May 30, Mockus made it clear that expanding the *Partido Verde* is a priority, especially in light of the upcoming municipal and regional elections next year, which he would like to

have plenty of the party's own candidates run in. The fact that Mockus's share of the votes did not disqualify him as feared and that he was even able to obtain more votes, if only to a limited extent, places the party in a good position

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to start this endeavor. One of Mockus's most important fellow party members, Penalosa, just announced that this party would be established as a "centrist party." As yet, it is unclear how forces with completely hetero-geneous ideologies within this movement will position themselves in this task and whether such a statement can appeal to the majority. There are ample points of contention within the party over issues of agendas and selecting members for offices.

Stating that one party is the second political power after the presidential elections is oversimplification. Colombian history has seen several successful electoral movements as part of presidential elections that failed to consolidate or even further expand party lines and did not achieve corresponding electoral success. The path leading from an opposition movement that is no longer cyclical to structured organization of parties is difficult. The parliamentary basis for this is extremely small. The *Partido Verde* also faces the mental obstacle of stepping back from aspiring for single representation and proving that it is willing to work in a coalition. This is particularly true for Mockus himself should he take on a leading role in this Herculean task.

IMPACTS ON THE PARTY SYSTEM

It is clearly too early for an in-depth analysis of the impact of these presidential elections and the formation of the *Unidad Nacional*. The election results and subsequent developments have uncovered points of contention in several parties. Clearing these points up will require quite some time yet. The results of these internal processes are difficult to assess. In addition to these inner-party develop-ments in the affected parties and the functioning of the *Unidad Nacional*, much also depends on the outcomes of the municipal and regional elections in the second half of 2011.

Many believe that with the *Unidad Nacional*, Colombia is entering a similar phase to that of the "Frente Nacional" from 1958 to 1974. This "National Front" consisted of the liberal party and the conservative party, which took turns in the executive and divided up all the other political levels of power among themselves. This notion is linked to the view that these presidential elections and the *Unidad Nacional* will damage the core of the multiparty system and that a regression to the traditional two-party system is foreseeable. Experience from Colombia's past is what marks this analysis. However, it appears problematic to impose these experiences on a context that is decades later.

As previously suggested, these presidential elections have uncovered and augmented latent points of contention in the parties as well as creating new ones. A partial reformation of Colombia's current party system will carry this trend forward. It is yet to be seen how the *Unidad Nacional* will function in the daily routine of Colombian politics. So far, the notion that the *Unidad Nacional* will result in an inevitable regression to a two-party system seems unlikely, since the differentiation of Colombian society and politics has advanced too far for that to happen.