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ACTION EUR-01

INFO	LOG-00	COR-01	INLB-01	AID-00	CIAE-00	SMEC-00	INL-01
	OASY-00	DODE-00	ANHR-01	SRPP-00	DS-00	FBIE-00	H-01
	TEDE-00	INR-00	LAB-01	L-01	MCO-01	ADS-00	MOFM-04
	MOF-03	M-00	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OMB-01	PA-00	PM-00
	PRS-00	P-00	SCT-00	SP-00	SSO-00	SS-00	TRSE-00
	USIE-00	SA-01	ASDS-01	SNIS-00	NISC-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00
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O 311147Z MAY 96
FM AMEMBASSY TIRANA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9575
USMISSION USVIENNA PRIORITY
INFO EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE

RELEASED IN PART
B6

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 TIRANA 001091

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y MSG REENTERED - FORMAT LINE TWO SHOULD
READ RUEHC VICE RUEHCD - AND SECTIONS 02 AND 03 WILL BE
REENTERED FOR PARA RENUMBERING

OPS CENTER PLS PASS TO EUR/SCE - J. SWIGERT AT OOB

DEPARTMENT FOR G, EUR SDAS PERINA AND FOR EUR/SCE

USVIENNA FOR USDEL OSCE
E.O.12958: DECL:05/31/96
TAGS: PREL, PGOV, AL, AMGT

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PAGE 02 TIRANA 01091 01 OF 03 091609Z
SUBJECT: THE ELECTION: WHAT HAPPENED?

REF: TIRANA 1055

1. (U) CLASSIFIED BY DRSMITH, CHARGE, PER 1.5B AND D.

SUMMARY

2. (C) THERE ARE DIFFERENCES OF OPINION AS TO DEGREE,
BUT IT IS CLEAR THAT THE MAY 26 ELECTION PROCESS IN

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: FRANK H PEREZ
DATE/CASE ID: 21 AUG 2003 200103200

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ALBANIA WAS SERIOUSLY FLAWED. SOME OBSERVERS WITNESSED FEW OR NO IRREGULARITIES; OTHERS FOUND NOTHING ACCEPTABLE WITH ANY ASPECT OF THE PROCESS. IRI, THE OSCE/ODIHR OBSERVER MISSION, THE OSCE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY, THE DOMESTIC OBSERVER ORGANIZATION "SOCIETY FOR DEMOCRATIC CULTURE" HAVE ALL RELEASED STATEMENTS. WE UNDERSTAND NDI PLANS NONE, ALTHOUGH WE HAVE DISCUSSED THEIR VIEWS. CONSIDERING ALL OF THESE, THE EMBASSY OBSERVATION EFFORT'S VIEWS COME DOWN APPROXIMATELY IN THE MIDDLE OF ALL THESE GROUPS. ROUGHLY STATED IT IS THAT, WITH CERTAIN NOTABLE AND IMPORTANT EXCEPTIONS, ESPECIALLY IN CERTAIN AREAS, AND ACKNOWLEDGING A LARGE AND TROUBLESOME VOLUME OF TECHNICAL PROBLEMS, THE PROCESS OF BALLOTING DURING THE DAY WENT REASONABLY WELL. MANY MORE SERIOUS IRREGULARITIES WERE NOTED DURING THE COUNTING PHASE; HOWEVER, IT IS VERY DIFFICULT TO CONCLUSIVELY EVALUATE THE COUNTING PHASE, SINCE THE OPPOSITION REPRESENTATIVES PULLED OUT OF THE CONTEST. NDI AND IRI AGREE WITH THE STATEMENT THAT, HAD THE COUNTING PHASE GONE AS WELL AS, AND NO WORSE THAN, THE BALLOTING PHASE, WE COULD PROBABLY HAVE ACCEPTED THIS ELECTION. THE OPPOSITION BEARS SOME
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CO-RESPONSIBILITY FOR DEGRADING THE COUNT PROCESS.
PERHAPS THE MOST IRONIC ASPECT OF ALL IS THAT, BY ALMOST ALL OBSERVATIONS, THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY WAS WINNING HANDILY, AND THE IRREGULAR ACTIVITY APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN UNNECESSARY.

WHAT THE EMBASSY SAW

3. (C) THE EMBASSY FIELDDED 10 TEAMS IN ALL REGIONS OF THE COUNTRY EXCEPT THE FAR NORTH. AT LEAST ONE MEMBER OF EACH TEAM ATTENDED A HALF-DAY TRAINING BRIEFING, PROVIDED BY OSCE/ODIHR. A FEW HAD OBSERVED ELECTIONS BEFORE. EACH TEAM HAD A FLUENT ALBANIAN SPEAKER OR AN INTERPRETER ALONG. THREE OF THESE TEAMS DID NOT OBSERVE THE VOTE COUNT PHASE OF THE ELECTION.

4. (C) OBSERVATIONS RANGED FAIRLY WIDELY. ONE TEAM FOUND FLAGRANT VIOLATIONS AND IRREGULARITIES (BALLOT STUFFING, COMPLETION OF BALLOTS AFTER VOTING HAD CLOSED, IMPROPER INVALIDATION OF BALLOTS AND GENERAL POLICE INTIMIDATION THROUGH A HEAVY POLICE PRESENCE IN THE DISTRICT WHERE THE INTERIOR MINISTER WAS RUNNING FOR RE-ELECTION) THROUGH EVERY PHASE OF THE PROCESS. ANOTHER

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TEAM WITNESSED MULTIPLE BALLOTING BY AN INDIVIDUAL VOTER AND COUNTING IRREGULARITIES (MORE VOTES CAST THAN NAMES OF VOTED ON THE VOTING LIST, FOLLOWED BY AN ATTEMPT TO RECONCILE THE DIFFERENCE). A THIRD TEAM WITNESSED THE WEAKLY-MOTIVATED ARREST OF LOCAL SOCIALIST LEADERS AS POLLS OPENED AND LATER SAW PLAINCLOTHES POLICE BRAZENLY ENTERING VOTING STATIONS DURING THE VOTE COUNT. ON THE OTHER HAND, THREE TEAMS WHICH SAW ONLY A FEW TECHNICAL

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IRREGULARITIES (SOCIALIST COMMISSION MEMBERS USUALLY SEATED FURTHER FROM THE TABLE WITH VOTING MATERIALS THAN THE PD REPS, CAMPAIGN POSTERS IN OR NEAR THE VOTING PLACES) DURING THE BALLOTING AND SOME PROBABLE COUNT PROBLEMS (QUESTIONABLE INVALIDATION OF SOME BALLOTS).

EMBASSY INVESTIGATES OPPOSITION ALLEGATIONS

5. (C) IT MUST BE NOTED THAT EMBASSY TEAMS ATTEMPTED TO INVESTIGATE REPORTS OF SERIOUS IRREGULARITIES AS THEY WERE RECEIVED FROM OPPOSITION POLITICAL PARTIES THROUGHOUT THE DAY AND FOUND ALL OF THEM EITHER ENTIRELY UNFOUNDED OR EXAGGERATED. WE INVESTIGATED 7 CASES WHERE IT WAS ALLEGED THAT AN OPPOSITION VOTING CENTER COMMISSIONER HAD BEEN ARBITRARILY REMOVED. THE ALLEGATION IN MOST CASES WAS THAT S/HE HAD BEEN REMOVED BY THE POLICE AT THE INSISTENCE OF THE COMMISSION CHAIRMAN (ALMOST ALWAYS A PD PERSON). IN FIVE OF THESE CASES THE ALLEGATION WAS ENTIRELY FALSE. IN TWO CASES OPPOSITION MEMBERS HAD BEEN REMOVED BY A VOTE IN THE COMMISSION FOR VARIOUS INFRACTIONS.

6. (C) WE INVESTIGATED ALLEGATIONS THAT CADETS FROM THE POLICE ACADEMY OUTSIDE TIRANA WERE INVOLVED IN AN ORGANIZED SCHEME OF MULTIPLE VOTING, WHICH INVOLVED VOTING IN THE UNIVERSITY AREA AND THEN AGAIN IN A SUBURBAN VILLAGE. AFTER A LENGTHY EFFORT BY CHARGE AND D/ATT TO COVER ALL POLLING STATIONS IN THE SUBURBAN

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	DRL-09	G-00	/028W				

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O 311147Z MAY 96
FM AMEMBASSY TIRANA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9575
USMISSION USVIENNA PRIORITY
INFO EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 TIRANA 001091

OPS CENTER PLS PASS TO EUR/SCE - J. SWIGERT AT OOB

DEPARTMENT FOR G, EUR SDAS PERINA AND FOR EUR/SCE

USVIENNA FOR USDEL OSCE

E.O.12958: DECL:05/31/96
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ALBANIA WAS SERIOUSLY FLAWED. SOME OBSERVERS WITNESSED
FEW OR NO IRREGULARITIES; OTHERS FOUND NOTHING ACCEPTABLE
WITH ANY ASPECT OF THE PROCESS. IRI, THE OSCE/ODIHR
OBSERVER MISSION, THE OSCE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY, THE
DOMESTIC OBSERVER ORGANIZATION "SOCIETY FOR DEMOCRATIC
CULTURE" HAVE ALL RELEASED STATEMENTS. WE UNDERSTAND NDI

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PLANS NONE, ALTHOUGH WE HAVE DISCUSSED THEIR VIEWS. CONSIDERING ALL OF THESE, THE EMBASSY OBSERVATION EFFORT'S VIEWS COME DOWN APPROXIMATELY IN THE MIDDLE OF ALL THESE GROUPS. ROUGHLY STATED IT IS THAT, WITH CERTAIN NOTABLE AND IMPORTANT EXCEPTIONS, ESPECIALLY IN CERTAIN AREAS, AND ACKNOWLEDGING A LARGE AND TROUBLESOME VOLUME OF TECHNICAL PROBLEMS, THE PROCESS OF BALLOTING DURING THE DAY WENT REASONABLY WELL. MANY MORE SERIOUS IRREGULARITIES WERE NOTED DURING THE COUNTING PHASE; HOWEVER, IT IS VERY DIFFICULT TO CONCLUSIVELY EVALUATE THE COUNTING PHASE, SINCE THE OPPOSITION REPRESENTATIVES PULLED OUT OF THE CONTEST. NDI AND IRI AGREE WITH THE STATEMENT THAT, HAD THE COUNTING PHASE GONE AS WELL AS, AND NO WORSE THAN, THE BALLOTING PHASE, WE COULD PROBABLY HAVE ACCEPTED THIS ELECTION. THE OPPOSITION BEARS SOME CO-RESPONSIBILITY FOR DEGRADING THE COUNT PROCESS. PERHAPS THE MOST IRONIC ASPECT OF ALL IS THAT, BY ALMOST ALL OBSERVATIONS, THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY WAS WINNING

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WHAT THE EMBASSY SAW

3. (C) THE EMBASSY FIELDDED 10 TEAMS IN ALL REGIONS OF THE COUNTRY EXCEPT THE FAR NORTH. AT LEAST ONE MEMBER OF EACH TEAM ATTENDED A HALF-DAY TRAINING BRIEFING, PROVIDED BY OSCE/ODIHR. A FEW HAD OBSERVED ELECTIONS BEFORE. EACH TEAM HAD A FLUENT ALBANIAN SPEAKER OR AN INTERPRETER ALONG. THREE OF THESE TEAMS DID NOT OBSERVE THE VOTE COUNT PHASE OF THE ELECTION.

4. (C) OBSERVATIONS RANGED FAIRLY WIDELY. ONE TEAM FOUND FLAGRANT VIOLATIONS AND IRREGULARITIES (BALLOT STUFFING, COMPLETION OF BALLOTS AFTER VOTING HAD CLOSED, IMPROPER INVALIDATION OF BALLOTS AND GENERAL POLICE INTIMIDATION THROUGH A HEAVY POLICE PRESENCE IN THE DISTRICT WHERE THE INTERIOR MINISTER WAS RUNNING FOR RE-ELECTION) THROUGH EVERY PHASE OF THE PROCESS. ANOTHER TEAM WITNESSED MULTIPLE BALLOTING BY AN INDIVIDUAL VOTER AND COUNTING IRREGULARITIES (MORE VOTES CAST THAN NAMES OF VOTED ON THE VOTING LIST, FOLLOWED BY AN ATTEMPT TO RECONCILE THE DIFFERENCE). A THIRD TEAM WITNESSED THE WEAKLY-MOTIVATED ARREST OF LOCAL SOCIALIST LEADERS AS POLLS OPENED AND LATER SAW PLAINCLOTHES POLICE BRAZENLY

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ENTERING VOTING STATIONS DURING THE VOTE COUNT. ON THE OTHER HAND, THREE TEAMS WHICH SAW ONLY A FEW TECHNICAL IRREGULARITIES (SOCIALIST COMMISSION MEMBERS USUALLY SEATED FURTHER FROM THE TABLE WITH VOTING MATERIALS THAN THE PD REPS, CAMPAIGN POSTERS IN OR NEAR THE VOTING
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PLACES) DURING THE BALLOTING AND SOME PROBABLE COUNT PROBLEMS (QUESTIONABLE INVALIDATION OF SOME BALLOTS).

EMBASSY INVESTIGATES OPPOSITION ALLEGATIONS

5. (C) IT MUST BE NOTED THAT EMBASSY TEAMS ATTEMPTED TO INVESTIGATE REPORTS OF SERIOUS IRREGULARITIES AS THEY WERE RECEIVED FROM OPPOSITION POLITICAL PARTIES THROUGHOUT THE DAY AND FOUND ALL OF THEM EITHER ENTIRELY UNFOUNDED OR EXAGGERATED. WE INVESTIGATED 7 CASES WHERE IT WAS ALLEGED THAT AN OPPOSITION VOTING CENTER COMMISSIONER HAD BEEN ARBITRARILY REMOVED. THE ALLEGATION IN MOST CASES WAS THAT S/HE HAD BEEN REMOVED BY THE POLICE AT THE INSISTENCE OF THE COMMISSION CHAIRMAN (ALMOST ALWAYS A PD PERSON). IN FIVE OF THESE CASES THE ALLEGATION WAS ENTIRELY FALSE. IN TWO CASES OPPOSITION MEMBERS HAD BEEN REMOVED BY A VOTE IN THE COMMISSION FOR VARIOUS INFRACTIONS.

8. (C) WE INVESTIGATED ALLEGATIONS THAT CADETS FROM THE POLICE ACADEMY OUTSIDE TIRANA WERE INVOLVED IN AN ORGANIZED SCHEME OF MULTIPLE VOTING, WHICH INVOLVED VOTING IN THE UNIVERSITY AREA AND THEN AGAIN IN A SUBURBAN VILLAGE. AFTER A LENGTHY EFFORT BY CHARGE AND D/ATT TO COVER ALL POLLING STATIONS IN THE SUBURBAN

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SA-01	ASDS-01	SNIS-00	NISC-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00	PRME-01
DRL-09	G-00	/028W				

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O 311147Z MAY 96
FM AMEMBASSY TIRANA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9576
USMISSION USVIENNA PRIORITY
INFO EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 03 TIRANA 001091

OPS CENTER PLS PASS TO EUR/SCE - J. SWIGERT AT OOB

DEPARTMENT FOR G, EUR SDAS PERINA AND FOR EUR/SCE

USVIENNA FOR USDEL OSCE

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VILLAGE, WE CONCLUDED THE ALLEGATION WAS UNFOUNDED.
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(COMMENT: THESE ALLEGATIONS WERE ALL FORMAL ALLEGATIONS,
DELIVERED TO US FROM THE SOCIALIST AND DEMOCRATIC
ALLIANCE PARTIES DURING THE DAY. THE FACT THAT ALL WERE
EITHER FALSE OR HIGHLY DISTORTED CASTS DOUBT OVER MANY
OTHER ALLEGATIONS MADE BY THESE OPPOSITION PARTIES. END
COMMENT)

NDI'S COMMENTS

9. (C) NDI REPRESENTATIVES [REDACTED]
CONFIRMED THAT NDI PLANS NO STATEMENT BUT HELPED CRAFT
AND WILL SUPPORT THE SOCIETY FOR DEMOCRATIC CULTURE'S
(SDC) STATEMENT (PARA 13). NEVERTHELESS, WE SPOKE WITH
THE NDI REPS ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS AND BELIEVE IT IS
ACCURATE TO SAY THAT THE EXPERIENCE OF THEIR MONITORS
CONFORMS ROUGHLY WITH THAT OF OURS. THAT IS, A FEW SAW
FEW OR NO MAJOR PROBLEMS, WHILE OTHERS SAW MASSIVE FRAUD
EVERYWHERE. NDI REPS AGREED THAT, HAD THE COUNTING PHASE
GONE AS WELL AS, AND NO WORSE THAN, THE VOTING PHASE, WE
COULD PROBABLY HAVE ACCEPTED THIS ELECTION. BUT THEY

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ALSO AGREED THAT THE COUNTING PHASE DID NOT GO AS WELL AND WAS BESET BY SERIOUS PROBLEMS.

11. (C) NDI HAS NOTED THAT THE RESULT MAY NOT HAVE BEEN DRASTICALLY AFFECTED BY THE FLAWS IN THE PROCESS. TO BE FAIR, HOWEVER, THIS STATEMENT WAS MADE BEFORE THE FINAL RESULT WAS ANNOUNCED.

IRI'S STATEMENT

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12. (U) IRI RELEASED A PRELIMINARY STATEMENT MAY 30, WHICH CONCLUDED THAT "WHILE NOT WIDESPREAD, OBSERVED VOTING IRREGULARITIES RAISE SERIOUS QUESTIONS ABOUT THE CONDUCT AND INTEGRITY OF A NUMBER OF ALBANIA'S 1996 PARLIAMENTARY CONTESTS." THE IRI STATEMENT ENUMERATES PRE-ELECTION PROBLEMS, INCLUDING HARASSMENT OF OPPOSITION MEMBERS, RESTRICTIONS ON OPPOSITION RALLIES, POLICE PARTISANSHIP, AND ELECTORAL ORGANIZATIONAL PROBLEMS. ON VOTING PROCESS ITSELF, IRI OUTLINED VARIOUS PROCEDURAL INCONSISTENCIES AND NOTED AN UNEVEN APPLICATION OF THE ELECTORAL LAW. IN THE VOTE TABULATION PROCESS, THE STATEMENT NOTES A HIGH NUMBER OF INVALID BALLOTS, AND SPORADIC REPORTS OF REMARKING OF BALLOTS AND REPORTING OF INACCURATE RESULTS. THE STATEMENT ALSO CRITICIZES OPPOSITION PARTIES FOR WITHDRAWING PRIOR TO THE VOTE COUNTING PHASE.

SDC'S STATEMENT

13. (U) IN A MAY 30 DECLARATION, THE ALBANIAN CIVIC NGO "SOCIETY FOR DEMOCRATIC CULTURE" (SDC) NOTED PROBLEMS IT HAD ACCREDITING OBSERVERS IN SEVERAL ELECTION ZONES, THE INABILITY OF OPPOSITION MEMBERS OF MANY VOTING COMMISSIONS TO FULLY OBSERVE VOTING PROCEDURES, AND AN INSUFFICIENT NUMBER OF VOTING PROTOCOLS. THE DECLARATION GOES ON TO NOTE THE HIGH NUMBER OF INVALID BALLOTS, VOTER REGISTRATION PROBLEMS, AND THE DIFFICULTIES CREATED BY THE WITHDRAWAL OF OPPOSITION PARTIES FROM THE COMMISSIONS BEFORE THE VOTE COUNT. THE DECLARATION CONCLUDES WITH A CRITICISM OF STATE MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE CAMPAIGN, WHICH IT JUDGES WAS HEAVILY BIASED IN FAVOR OF THE DEMOCRATIC

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PARTY.

ODIHR'S POSITION

14. (U) ODIHR'S VIEWS ARE PERHAPS THE MOST STRONGLY STATED OF ALL. ODIHR'S POST-ELECTION STATEMENT REPORTS THAT "OBSERVERS NOTED WITH REGRET THAT IN MANY INSTANCES THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE (ELECTORAL) LAW FAILED TO MEET ITS OWN CRITERIA." ODIHR NOTES A LACK OF DECISION BY MAJORITY VOTE PROVIDED BY LAW IN COMMISSIONS, CONFUSION CREATED BY THE LACK OF SUFFICIENT PROTOCOLS, QUESTIONS ABOUT THE ACCURACY OF VOTING LISTS, SERIOUS IRREGULARITIES IN THE VOTE COUNTING PROCESS AS WELL AS MANY INVALID BALLOTS, AND THE INTIMIDATING PRESENCE OF "ARMED INDIVIDUALS AND UNIDENTIFIED PERSONS INSIDE POLLING STATIONS."

IRI'S EXIT POLL - WAS CHEATING NECESSARY?

15. (U) ALONG WITH ITS STATEMENT, IRI PUBLISHED THE RESULTS OF ITS EXIT POLL, WHICH ENCOMPASSED 2400 INTERVIEWS AT 160 VOTING CENTERS AROUND THE COUNTRY. ACCORDING TO THAT SURVEY, THE PD WAS PREDICTED TO WIN 56 PERCENT OF THE VOTE TO THE PS'S 22 PERCENT, WITH THE PAD PICKING UP 5 PERCENT, THE REPUBLICANS 4 PERCENT, THE

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SOCIAL DEMOCRATS 3 PERCENT AND THE (ETHNIC GREEK) HUMAN
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RIGHTS PARTY WINNING 2 PERCENT. IN FOUR ZONES WHERE A
MORE INTENSIVE COUNT WAS MADE, THE EXIT POLL RESULTS WERE
WITHIN 4 PERCENTAGE POINTS OF REPORTED RESULTS IN THREE
CASES, AND WITHIN TEN PERCENTAGE POINTS (WELL OUTSIDE
MARGIN OF ERROR) IN THE FOURTH CASE.

16. (C) THE RESULTS OF IRI'S EXIT POLL SUGGEST THAT THE
PD WAS SET TO WIN BY A SUBSTANTIAL MARGIN, EVEN ABSENT
MANIPULATIONS AND OTHER IRREGULARITIES.

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