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INTERVIEW WITH OTTO GUEVARA
LEGISLATOR LIBERTARIAN MOVEMENT (*MOVIMIENTO LIBERTARIO*)
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SAN JOSE, COSTA RICA

JOHN: A question about the directorate (*directorio*). All of the members of the Legislative Assembly's directorate are from the majority party?

LEGISLATOR OTTO GUEVARA: That's how it is now, although it doesn't necessarily have to be this way. The majority of our Congress' legislators (*diputados*) -we have a total of 57- 29 legislators define who will occupy the six positions which pertain to the directorate. In the last elections, the totality of the members has belonged to government's party. Even though this party only has 27 legislators in the Congress, it's been able to obtain support from smaller parties at different times in order to hold the six positions.

JOHN CAREY:..... the six positions.....

GUEVARA: We're beginning. In the three years, the six positions have corresponded to the government's party.

JOHN: How's the parliamentary agenda coordinated with the other parties?

GUEVARA: The Legislative Assembly's Regulations were reformed last year. The Regulations very clearly establish the procedure to determine the parliamentary agenda in the Legislative Plenary, which is the session where the 57 legislators participate. The rules are very clearly established. Today, there are seven legislative factions; we have two majority political parties - one with 27 legislators and the other with 23 -, a party with three legislators and then four parties that have a single legislator apiece. From this point of view, seven legislative factions are entitled to place bills (*proyectos*) in the Legislative Agenda. The two majority political parties conform the first ten bills of the agenda - six are proposed by the government's party and four are proposed by the main opposition party. Then, one bill is proposed by each of the other political parties represented in the Legislative Assembly. That's the way that it's established in our regulations.

If we don't reach an agreement with 38 votes to determine the day's schedule (*orden del día*) with this agenda, then we resort to an alternate system using the historical agenda which is according to the date that these bills were ruled upon in commission and whether they were ruled on in an affirmative unanimous way or if they were by affirmative majority. Then, they're situated in preferencial (*prelación*) order and they're made known.

JOHN: Has it been necessary to do a second round (*segunda vuelta*)?

GUEVARA: Right now we've already taken three weeks and we've had to opt for the second method because it's not been possible to establish an agenda.

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JOHN: Is the composition of the Assembly's commission more or less proportional by political faction?

GUEVARA: In our regulation there's no disposition that requires the integration of the permanent commissions to be carried out in a proportional manner according to the size of the legislative factions in the Congress. However, there is the principle that it should be done in a proportional way, but there's no requirement to do it proportionally. Only a couple of commissions, some commissions that are called special permanent commissions, establish that the government's party elects three, the main oppositon party elects three and between all of the other parties, which are different from the two already mentioned, they elect the remaining person. That situation occurs in two commissions out of the ten or eleven special permanent commissions that exist.

JOHN: But are they elected or are they designated?

GUEVARA: The factions elect, each one chooses three and all the other minority parties elect their person. Then the seven, in a session, determine who'll be the one who presides over the commission. For example, yesterday they chose me as president of the Commission of Control of Public Revenue and Expenditures (*Comisión de Control de Ingreso y Gasto Público*), I being the only legislator from the *Movimiento Libertario* here.

JOHN: And the presidency is elected in the ordinary commissions?

GUEVARA: Internallly, each commission names who's the president or who presides over the commission, as well as who's the secretary, who's the vice-president.

JOHN: Are nominal votings quite rare?

GUEVARA: During the past two years there haven't been any.

JOHN: Do electronic voting machines exist in the plenary?

GUEVARA: The device exists, but it's not used. It'd be interesting for you to speak with Humberto Morales who's the person that knows most about the Legislative Assembly. He's the advisor of the directorate and he's perhaps the most important "living library"(*biblioteca viviente*) that there is in the Legislative Assembly. Technical problems, I think. Here we continue to vote affirmatively by standing up, and negatively by remaining seated.

JOHN: These are all of the questions. Thank you.