INTERVIEW WITH:
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LIMA, PERU
May 9, 2001

JOHN: I'm interested in the effect of the public vote. In other words, the registry of votings that are published, for the legislative process. To begin, please explain to me how the public vote was carried out in the Peruvian Congress during Fujimori's government.

MANUEL MASIAS: The votings, the votings, you refer to the votings registered in the Congress?
JOHN: Yes, and which are published.

MANUEL MASIAS: The votings, the votings, the votings...that didn't happen in the government of Fujimori. We've begun due to the constitutional change, starting last year in November, that's when the regime fell, we've begun to make certain public votings.

JOHN: But even before that, for something like two years I've seen the votings on the web page.

MANUEL MASIAS: Ah, you speak of the web page. No, I was referring to that we send the votings to the newspapers of the capital for them to be published. Why's this positive? Because it allows for an appropriate oversight (*fiscalización*) by the citizenship, it allows for an individualized follow-up of each parliamentarian's behavior. And in a system like ours, which is defective because we don't have a mechanism of abrogation to the legislative mandate, we don't have the possibility of renovating by a third or by half of the Parliament. The parliamentarian usually comes here sort of like a blank check, he's not supervised, not controlled by the population. So, to have the registries of the votings on the web page, to publish them - which started beginning last year -, in the daily newspapers for the people to know how certain transcendental votings in the national arena were voted, to see which way each legislator voted. To give you some examples of votings that have been published: when the decision was made to change to the multiple electoral district system, that was published and then you saw right there who were the ones with a decentralist vocation and who were those who didn't want to make this reform. Also, many votings linked to the declaration of vacancy for moral incapacity. The effect is that the public opinion exercises control over the Parliament, because this Parliament's a little more controlled since it has multiple districts -or rather, the next one -, but definitively it's been done in this line.

JOHN: What surprised me was that during the Fujimori regime, which wasn't exactly known for its transparency, this practice was begun.

MANUEL MASIAS: Well, we have a Parliament that's not a product of this Executive Board (*Mesa Directiva*), which already began some time ago. It's a very modern Parliament in terms of computer science. It's probably the Congress - we've had comments, we've heard this - that's the

most computerized in Latin America. There's even a publication that would be good for you to have. It's a book. It's an advance. For example, we've been able to put the videotapes, of the corruption, on the Congress' web page. And this was done so the whole world, not only Peru, can see how corruption operates. This testimony's invaluable, it shouldn't only be for the reflection of the Peruvians. There's corruption all over the entire world and the fact that we can see how hidden power operates and the mechanisms which make it acceptable; these are things that, in the struggle against corruption, should make us all reflect on. In other words that no, that it is a powerful mechanism of persuasion, to generate a stream of opinion and oversight.

JOHN: One reads the newspapers and I've seen that the votings of the Congress members are published and they're analyzed. When the Congress members decide how to vote, do they think of the implications of the votings on their political stature?

MANUEL MASIAS: If, for example, you have a political group that's characterized to be moralizing or overseeing (*moralizador o fiscalizador*) and if among its members there's not this same zeal for the struggle against corruption, that voting harms the group. In other words, the group does its best. For example, if you have groups striving to defend Fujimori, they'll take pains in the votings. But here you also have a very singular situation and that's why I'm giving you all this information. We have close to nine groups in the Congress. You have the so-called group "without a group" *(sin grupo*); for example, they don't owe anybody anything because they're people who aren't in political parties and who're a product of the crisis and have stayed around here.

JOHN: They're a product of the crisis....?

MANUEL MASIAS: Not necessarily, because you have the "non-grouped" (*no agrupados*) group and there also are "deserters" (*tránsfugas*), there's everything. Here, for example you have Chancellor Tudela, of the so-called "without a group" (*sin grupo*), who abandoned the governmental ranks *(filas gobiernistas*). I belong to that group, I'm a member of the Executive Board, I don't have a party party right now. Clearly, here the responsibility is individual, not collective. Me yes, in my personal case, yes I'm very careful in all the votings and I also procure that they become public because they're the testimony of your behavior. Everybody who wants to continue in politics, to participate in elections, has to be an example. The votings are the historical account of the will (*historiación de la voluntad*) in all fields. I, for example, am a defender of the fishers (*pesqueros*) and it happens sometimes that norms are approved that go against the fishery (*pesquería)*. Or a civic initiative that there was with regard to the privatization of ports. So, there, you see who is who. There you also see how they can..... the lobbys of certain people. For example, here in Peru - it's a shame - I have a bill presented, a law of political parties that hasn't been approved, like a norm that establishes the registry of campaign contributors or donors, with the objective of knowing who donates, how much they donate, because then that allows you, later on, to see if that donor - who can be a businessman or an industrialist- is being benefitted with laws, with norms or if he's being protected to not be audited *(no ser fiscalizado*). So, here it's important to make the economic recourse (*resorte económico*), that's behind the politicians and the campaigns, known. That's why this topic is

fundamental. In any case, there are too many political groups for a Parliament that permanently must seek consensus.

JOHN: Were the votings for the Congress members who postulated to be re-elected debated in last month's campaign?

MANUEL MASIAS: Yes, sure. Of course, without any doubt.

JOHN: How will the role of the Peruvian Congress be changed in next governmental period? The role of the Congress in the political system.

MANUEL MASIAS: Look, we have, cyclically, a history of coup d'etats and democracies. Today once again, its the turn for a "democratic spring" that we hope this time, yes, will be permanent, forever. So, we're entering into a stage of strengthening the democracy, where there isn't a Congress with majorities. In Peru it's always been said that the country only is governable when there's a Congress with majorities, a strong Congress. However, the Peruvian people don't want that. The Peruvian people want consensus, they want agreement, they want concertation *(concertación*), they want unity. They don't want more authoritarianism (*autoritarismo*). So the challenge is huge because there's going to be a President of the Republic without a majority in the Congress who will be permanently obliged to concert, to reconcile, to seek understanding, to dialogue, to negotiate. So that's a change in Peru's political culture that we've begun to experience ever since the negotiation table under the auspices of the OAS. We notice that up to now we've known how to overcome a very difficult crisis without a drop of blood, without a death. Beginning with the dialogue table and up to now, there hasn't been a single death and we've solved our problems where there could've easily been some confrontations. We have the jails full of Ministers of the State, General Majors of the Armed Forces, high officials; so this reveals that in a country where none of them has ever gone to jail, today they're in jail and you have a very strong attitude as overseer (*fiscalizador*). This is a sign that many changes are to come. I imagine that the next leader (*gobernante*) will have to - precisely because he will be a weak leader in terms of not having a parliamentary majority - hold hands (*ir de la mano de*) with the public opinion. In other words, he will be able to be very transparent. The government's practice will have to be one that seeks understanding, agreement. Here there's not a political culture of negotiation. Here, negotiation, is even a word that's not well understood. But in the modern world there's no way to overlook these mechanisms and this new government that comes forward will have to face this challenge. To govern by convincing, not by commanding, not by giving orders.

JOHN: In the next government, will a stable majority coalition be able to be formed in the Congress?

MANUEL MASIAS: That depends on the next elections' electoral result, who takes the victory. It depends on how mature and how responsible the government is as far as fulfilling their electoral promises. Here, the vote's not programmatic; in other words, here you don't vote for government plans, here you vote more by your emotional mood, by your guts (*un carácter hepático*). You vote against somebody, you vote for the ones they did something to. You vote because in the end you emotionally identify with a candidate, but little care and observation is

placed on the government's plan, on the project, on electoral strength. Here, maybe it's an error of political marketing to concentrate on the message - that the campaign is the message - and the political essence itself is neglected which is efficiency, service. But fundamentally the next government has to be an exemplary government as far as morals, ethics, values. A democracy has values that sustain it and precisely, the leader must be a good person, a person who preaches with his example, who's honest, who's honorable, who's sincere, who's open to understanding. That's why we've contributed so that now in Peru there won't be any re-elections, which is marvelous. You know that he [the leader] has 5 years to develop his work, if consensus fails, if agreement fails, we will repeat, without any doubt, a coup d'etat. I don't have the smallest doubt that if there's no concertation we will once again have a rupture of constitutional order.

JOHN: How's the strengthening of the Congress institutionalized?

MANUEL MASIAS: Yes, now, perfect. This is an institution that requires very profound changes. It was an error to think that the changes that had to be made were among - I'll give you an example, 1,600 computers to the....., that's an error, that's not the thing -. Our Parliament needs to legitimize itself on the basis of having permanent contact with the people. That means that the function of representing has to be carried out in a better way. Some steps have been taken, for example we've established the Center for Public Reconciliation. The Congress will have a service of arbitrators (*conciliadores*) so that we also know how to channel all of these demands. We will have a different system of counseling to allow the parliamentarian to be more efficient in his laws and really not arrive at the Congress promising bridges and highways, when he knows that those expenses aren't decided here, but rather making promises that he can fulfill. This makes the Parliament also require another House (*cámara*). This is a new system of unicamerality (*unicameralidad*) which isn't the most appropriate. Our tradition is bicamerality *(bicameralidad)* and it's necessary to perfect it. We need different representation mechanisms; not only the multiple one that we have now, but rather a multiple one where everything's fused which comes out of the single electoral district. In this way you'll have parliamentarians with a regional location, but also parliamentarians with a complete national location. I believe it's necessary to work a lot on that matter. It's necessary to work a lot with regard to relationships with the Executive. We should accustom ourselves to use the mechanisms that are in place, mechanisms such as, for example, the station of questions once-a-month; the topic of the parliamentary investiture where the ministers.... has to be perfected. The permanent dialogue of the ministers has to be adapted. There are changes, some of which have already been mentioned. That regional offices of the Congress be established, for example, all over Peru. We require a modernization, but we also require that the factor of human beings, in other words, the parliamentarian as a woman, as a man, must be a person with values, with principles; deeply linked to ethics, who comes to carry out their ideals. The Parliament has a very bad image in Peru, although now we've reached a 51% of acceptance in Lima; never before in our history, never before has there been 51% approval, according to the last support survey.

JOHN: It's higher than that of the North American Congress.

MANUEL MASIAS: Imagine and 45% at the national level. It means that when one does one's best to be connected with the population and the chemistry that's taking place now with the

people is the oversight (*fiscalización*). In other words, people feel that this work, this aspect, is being done well. While the people feel this and approve of it, they also hate and criticize the fact that someone wants to be paid for "the lost profit" *(lucro cesante*), or receive compensations, "last names" (*apellidos*) that don't correspond to such a poor country as the Peruvian people. The Peruvian people, with half its population below the poverty line, is very strong for a country. What I want to tell you is that yes, many changes are needed and changes are also required of the person. There has to be more human formation. Also, all this is linked to the political parties because here there's not a solid system of political parties, here the development of the political parties is null; there are practically no primary elections, no leadership, and in the end all of this adds up to that the leaders who arrive - not all - are people who don't have a very clear idea of what their place is before the country and before the world, in other words, what they're here for. They're here to carry out a work of service and not to be served.

JOHN: Something interesting. In the analysis that I've done already, up to now, on discipline and partisan unity in the votings, I obtained a group of votings from the period that comprehends the year 1999 through the first months of 2000. In the analysis I found that the level of unity, of discipline in the Peruvian parties, was as high as in any other country of the world. In Mexico with the PRI, in the European countries with their disciplined parties. I imagine that when I do the analysis again with votings after the Fujimori period, I will find a lower level of discipline. Do you agree?

MANUEL MASIAS: Yes, that's right. That's a product of the crisis. We, upon breaking Fujimori's authoritarian hegemony, that was translated in "arithmetic democracis" *(democrasis aritmética*), the arithmetic of the votes, the majority rules and the majority's always right because the majority has more votes. That's a fallacy, it's a lie. The parliamentarians aren't subject to an imperative mandate, they have to respond according to their consciences and to the country. So, on certain points that are very complex to decide on, you can clearly see that now there's more freedom, more freedom to vote. Yes, I see this as something very positive, that the parliamentarian be free; of course, they have a responsibility before their party, but it's freedom and responsibility, they're the two wings of the same bird; in other words, there's no way to separate them. And when you see closed votings, for example, which are militarily disciplined, it's shameful because many times it's done without reason, they're simply doing it because it's a party dictate. I believe that it's necessary to argue that the votings be the faithful expression of freedom and responsibility and commitment with the voters and the parties. First comes the country and then, it's the party and after that comes the person, this is the escatological (*escatológico*) order of a parliamentarian's behavior.

JOHN: Last question. From the citizen's perspective, from that of the Peruvian voter, what's demanded from the representatives? In other words, do they demand support or opposition to a governmental program? Attention to needs, to the demands of the voters who supported the Congress member with the preferential vote?

MANUEL MASIAS: What do the people want? The people want leadership. The people want for the persons who come here to be authentic leaders who constantly represent, who aren't disconnected from the national reality and who are always out there showing their face, are

always present, always listening, always representing and accompanying their people. The Peruvian people know perfectly well that a lot of times solutions aren't made here, that the solutions come mainly from the Executive Power. But the Peruvian people like to be listened to, they like to be assisted, they like to be protected; they don't like for there to be frivolity, that their authorities demostrate an irresponsible behavior. So, they demand leaders, they demand maturity and responsibility to confront the country's problems. That's why here one's called "Father of the Homeland" (*Padre de la Patria*), it's not just said for pleasure, it's that one has to be like this father, and mostly with those who occupy the last place in line of our society. I think that it's a little bit responsibility, paternalistic also, on our part, we who should be exactly the ones who're worried about the well-being of our people, and not worried about our own well-being. Regrettably, that a lot of times the Parliament has a terrible image of being frivolous, selfish, incapable. But it's very clear that the people want leaders, they don't want people to come here simply to be here or to not come at all, because there's also much of that, there's a lot of absenteeism in the Parliament, not everyone works with the same intensity and you can verify that any day that you may come.