

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Assistant Secretary Roger Noriega and
U.S. Permanent Representative John Maisto by
Senator Richard Lugar (#1)
Committee on Foreign Relations
Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere,
Peace Corps, and Narcotics Affairs
June 24, 2004**

Question:

The Organization of American States (OAS) observation team prepared a report of what they observed during the signature verification and "reparo" stages of the recall referendum process. Why has that report not been made public? Is it true that the OAS has dismantled the technical team that spent months in Venezuela observing the process? If so, why?

Answer:

OAS Secretary General Gárriga has decided that the OAS will release a complete report on its observation effort in Venezuela only after the recall process is finished. He believes that issuing an interim report would achieve little and could complicate the OAS's capacity to carry out its role in Venezuela through the August 15 recall referendum and beyond.

The OAS observation team in Venezuela for the signature verification and "reparo" process was designed to be agile, flexible and cost-efficient, with the ability to anticipate and respond to requirements as they arose. The "reparo" process was not an election with voting machines, electronic

tabulation processes and other technical observation requirements, but rather a verification of signatures of a smaller universe of constituents than a general referendum or election. The OAS had approximately 120 observers for the May 27-31 "reparo" process.