The Observation of the 1996 Nicaraguan Elections

A Report of the
Council of Freely Elected Heads of Government

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Oct. 17-22, 1996

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The Observation of the 1996 Nicaraguan Election

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The Council of Freely Elected Heads of Government

The Council of Freely Elected Heads of Government is a group of 28 current and former heads of government from throughout the Americas. The Council was established in November 1986 at a meeting chaired by former U.S. Presidents Jimmy Carter and Gerald Ford on “Reinforcing Democracy in the Americas” at The Carter Center. Its goals include reinforcing democracy in the Americas, promoting multilateral efforts to resolve conflict in the Western Hemisphere, and advancing economic cooperation throughout the region.

The Council has been a pioneer in mediating and observing elections. Its representatives have observed 15 elections in nine countries: Panama (1989, 1994), Nicaragua (1989-1990, 1996), the Dominican Republic (1990, 1996), Haiti (1987, 1990, 1995), Guyana (1990-92), Suriname (1991), the United States (1992), Paraguay (1993), and Mexico (1992, 1994). The elections in Nicaragua and Haiti were the first free elections accepted by all parties in the two nations’ histories, and in Guyana, they were the first such elections in 28 years. The Council has worked to help consolidate democracy in Guyana, Nicaragua, Panama, and Haiti. In addition to reinforcing democracy, the Council has supported efforts to resolve the debt crisis of the 1980s and to promote freer trade in the 1990s. Members have worked to resolve property problems in Nicaragua and Ecuador–Peru territorial disputes, among other issues.

The Council is based at the Latin American and Caribbean Program of The Carter Center. Dr. Robert Pastor, fellow at the Center, is executive secretary of the Council; Dr. David Carroll is associate director; Dr. Jennifer McCoy is senior research associate; and Ms. Becky Castle is program coordinator.

Members

Jimmy Carter, Chairman of the Council, Former President of the United States (1977-81)
George Price, Vice-Chairman, former Prime Minister of Belize (1981-84, 1989-93; Premier, 1965-81)
Ernesto Pérez Balladares, President of Panama (1994-present)
Rafael Caldera, President of Venezuela (1969-74, 1994-present)
Fernando Henrique Cardoso, President of Brazil (1995-present)
Carlos Saul Menem, President of Argentina (1989-present)
P.J. Patterson, Prime Minister of Jamaica (1992-present)
Julio Maria Sanguinetti, President of Uruguay (1985-89, 1995-present)
Raul Alfonsin, Former President of Argentina (1983-89)
Nicholas Ardito-Barelta, Former President of Panama (1984-85)
Oscar Arias Sánchez, Former President of Costa Rica (1986-90)
Jean-Bertrand Aristide, Former President of Haiti (1991-96)
Patricio Aylwin Azócar, Former Chilean President (1990-94)
Fernando Belaunde Terry, Former President of Peru (1963-68, 1980-85)
Belisario Betancur, Former President of Colombia (1982-86)
Rodrigo Carazo, Former President of Costa Rica (1978-82)
Víctor Cerezo, Former President of Guatemala (1986-90)
Joseph Clark, Former Prime Minister of Canada (1979-80)
John Compton, Former Prime Minister of St. Lucia (1987-96)
Gerald Ford, Former President of the United States (1974-77)
Osvaldo Hurtado, Former President of Ecuador (1981-84)
Luis Alberto Lacalle, Former President of Uruguay (1989-95)
Alfonso López Michelsen, Former President of Colombia (1974-78)
Michael Manley, Former Prime Minister of Jamaica (1972-80, 1988-92)
Carlos Andrés Pérez, Former President of Venezuela (1974-79, 1989-93)
Erskine Sandiford, Former Prime Minister of Barbados (1987-94)
Edward Seaga, Former Prime Minister of Jamaica (1980-88)
Pierre Trudeau, Former Prime Minister of Canada (1968-79, 1980-84)

Some founding members of the Council of Freely Elected Heads of Government gather after a 1989 meeting at The Carter Center to plan the monitoring of elections in Panama and Nicaragua. They included Rafael Callejas, Daniel Ortega (now deceased), George Price, and Jimmy Carter.
Preface and Acknowledgements

The Carter Center's involvement in Nicaragua's elections began in 1989 when the Council of Freely Elected Heads of Government, a group of 26 current and former heads of government from throughout the Americas chaired by Jimmy Carter and based at The Carter Center, was invited to observe the 1989-1990 electoral process. Our 1990 observation was marked by the opening of an office six months in advance of the election, multiple pre-election visits, and high-level mediation throughout the electoral process. After the 1990 election, The Carter Center maintained close contact with a wide range of Nicaraguan leaders who called on us to help facilitate an anti-inflation pact in 1991 and to resolve property disputes in 1994-95.

Between 1990 and 1996, in addition to The Carter Center's work in Nicaragua, the Council developed an expertise in election monitoring and mediation, observing 15 elections in nine countries. Considering our historical involvement in Nicaragua and the Council's expertise in mediation, in late summer of 1995, several political leaders contacted The Carter Center and other NGOs about observing the 1996 electoral process. Dr. Jennifer McCoy visited Nicaragua in December 1995 to assess the political climate and the political parties' views about the desirability of international observers for the 1996 elections. After receiving invitations from the Supreme Electoral Council (SEC), Arnoldo Aleman, and Daniel Ortega, we decided to organize an election observation mission. The second elections in a difficult transition are, in some ways, as critical as the first. We organized three additional pre-electoral trips—March 1996, June 1996, and August 1996—and established a field office there in May 1996. For the elections, The Carter Center organized a 47-member delegation and maintained nine observers in the country during the review process.

Support for the election project came from several sources: USAID was our principal sponsor, and we appreciate both the funding and their assistance in helping coordinate the efforts of all the international observer groups during the review process. In addition, we would like to thank Marianne Chalker, The Mott Foundation, Terence Isukov, and Ian Safi for their generous support of the project.

Personally, I would like to thank Dr. David Carroll, Becky Castle, and Harriette Martin of the Latin American and Caribbean Program (LACP) who attended to the project's day-to-day needs and demonstrated continued dedication in ensuring the success of our efforts. The following Carter Center interns also were of great help throughout the project, compiling briefing books, doing...
background research, and coordinating our delegation: Terena Carlson, Cecilia Nilsson, Brenda Mercer, Harish Padmanabha, Jonathan Todd, and Kim Wiley. In particular, we would like to thank Miguel Cornejo for his work on tracking the electoral events in Nicaragua and for joining the delegation. We also greatly appreciate The Carter Center staff who participated as members of our delegation: Osong Agborsangaya, Jason Calder, Deanna Congoleo, Sue Palmer, and Pam Wachtel. In Nicaragua, the delegation appreciated the help of our in-country staff including Aedrean Scheid, project assistant to Professor Shelley McConnell; Christy Holmes, secretary in the field office; and Rick Bauer, coordinator of ground transportation for the delegation. We also benefited from two scholars who joined our team in Nicaragua and lent us their valuable expertise: Craig Aucter and David Close.

There are two people without whose work The Carter Center would not have been able to observe these elections: Dr. Jennifer McCoy and Professor Shelley McConnell. I recruited Dr. McCoy, associate professor at Georgia State University and LACP senior associate, in 1989 to coordinate our office in Nicaragua during the 1990 elections. She worked with great determination and expertise. When we were contacted again in 1995, she felt a sense of obligation to complete the work begun during the previous election, and she took charge of the entire project. She then drafted the proposals for funding and organized four pre-election trips and one post-election trip, as well as the election delegation. Later, Professor McConnell, assistant professor at Bard College, undertook Dr. McCoy’s 1990 position. Taking a semester leave of absence to manage The Carter Center’s field observation, Professor McConnell tracked the electoral process: met with SEC and political party representatives; attended campaign rallies; coordinated logistics for pre-election, election, and post-election trips; and attended the inauguration of President Alemán. We are very grateful for all their work.

Dr. McCoy and Professor McConnell drafted this report. Becky Castle, Pam Aucter, and Lena Wilk edited the report, coordinated the layout, and prepared it for publication. I edited the final draft.

We wrote this report to describe the entire Nicaraguan electoral process and to highlight the Council’s observation of it. In hopes that the administration of Nicaraguan elections will improve and that international observers will continue to hone their methods of observation, we also make recommendations that we hope Nicaraguans and international observers will consider, and we stress the lessons learned from our observation.

Twenty years ago, when Jimmy Carter was president and I was director of Latin American Affairs on the National Security Council, the U.S. government tried unsuccessfully to mediate a democratic transition in Nicaragua. Five years later, the Sandinista government held elections, but the fragmented moderate opposition refused to participate, believing that the government would manipulate the process. Instead of trying to mediate, the Reagan administration encouraged the boycott.

In 1989 and 1990, when The Carter Center was invited by Nicaraguans to monitor and mediate the electoral process, we initially found the gap between the left and right too wide and the attributes of a democratic culture too shallow that we feared still another round of electoral failure. However, Nicaraguans, with the help of international mediators, overcame their suspicions and accepted the process and results of the free election. It marked a historic moment for Nicaragua, and by 1996, the country no longer was condemned to repeat its tragically unstable past. Nicaraguans had traveled a significant distance toward deepening their democracy to which we consider ourselves privileged to have contributed.

Robert A. Pastor
Atlanta, Georgia
Feb. 26, 1999
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<tr>
<td>Alianza Liberal (AL)</td>
<td>Liberal Alliance, led by Arnoldo Aleján</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camino Cristiano</td>
<td>Christian Way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDC</td>
<td>Departmental Counting Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cédula</td>
<td>Permanent citizen identification card</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIAV</td>
<td>International Commission for Support and Verification (OAS mission to demobilize contras, assist in their reintegration into society, and monitor human rights 1990-97)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CED</td>
<td>Departmental Electoral Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>constancias</td>
<td>Voter document issued by the SEC on the day before or the day of the election to those citizens who had registered, but who had not yet received a cédula or a documento supletorio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>documento supletorio</td>
<td>Temporary citizen identification card (valid for 1996 elections only)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ética Y Transparencia (ET)</td>
<td>Ethics and Transparency, a domestic observer group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frente Sandinista Liberación Nacional (FSLN)</td>
<td>Sandinista National Liberation Front, led by Daniel Ortega</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JRV</td>
<td>Junta receptora de votos or polling station</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>libreta cívica</td>
<td>Temporary paper voter document</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Nongovernmental organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OAS</td>
<td>Organization of American States</td>
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<td>padrón</td>
<td>List of registered voters</td>
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<td>SEC</td>
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Executive Summary

1. Although the world's attention was fixed on the first transitional election in 1990, Nicaragua recognized the importance of the 1996 elections to cement the democratic roles of the game and to generate confidence in political institutions. Unfortunately, the severe administrative challenges and high number of irregularities actually reduced confidence in the electoral institutions.

2. The ongoing political and economic transition led to sufficient uncertainty and apprehension about the elections that the Supreme Electoral Council and the political parties once again invited international observers—the OAS and several international NGOs, including The Carter Center's Council of Freely Elected Heads of Government—because of their impartiality.

3. The elections were extremely complicated, with six different elections occurring simultaneously, a new election law and election authorities, a mixed voter registration system, and a doubling in the number of polling stations. Political institutions were still weak, and the party system remained fragmented.

4. The fact that the two largest parties together won 88 percent of the vote reflects an emerging biparty system, but one that is polarized around the two ends of the ideological spectrum. The composition of the National Assembly, in which the Liberals fell short of an outright majority, implies that the government must sustain a coalition for normal legislating, and most likely will require Sandinista support to muster the 60 percent vote required for constitutional change.

5. The 1996 elections also demonstrated a greater commitment of the Nicaraguan society to the role of law. The campaign was an improvement over 1990, free of violence and harassment of political parties. The fact that all political parties, candidates, and the population participated in an unprecedented three-week review and partial recount of the votes in a peaceful, patient, and legal manner is a remarkable achievement for a country with its history of divisions and traumatic conflict.

6. We conclude that despite the serious shortcomings of these elections, they by and large reflected the preferences of the voters. Nevertheless, the fact that between 11 and 12 percent of the votes were refunded in the various elections and that a dozen parties submitted appeals, indicates the need for a serious evaluation of the process before the 1998 Atlantic Coast elections.

7. Restoring confidence in the electoral institutions is absolutely vital to continued democratic development in Nicaragua. Political leaders in the government and the opposition, along with the Supreme Electoral Council, need to work together to evaluate the experience of the 1996 elections and determine how to avoid a repetition of the problems. Lessons learned from the 1996 elections point to three areas for improvement:

   a) The electoral law needs to be reformed to improve the appointment procedures and lengthen the terms of Departmental Electoral Council members; and to clarify qualifications for candidacy, party financing rules, formulas to distribute legislative seats, conditions for challenging and reviewing vote counts, and conditions under which elections can be rerun.

   b) Election administration and procedures need to be improved to increase the professionalism of the election officials; improve communication mechanisms between the national, departmental, and JRV levels; and improve the transmission of vote results.

   The NEC needs to provide full explanations to the public of their decisions on the vote counts and appeals. The cedulation process should be completed before the Atlantic Coast elections in 1998. The Electoral Prosecutor needs the full political and financial backing of the government to complete investigations into possible electoral crimes committed in the 1996 elections.
The Carter delegation congregates during the briefing on Oct. 18, two days prior to the election.

- International observers should be better organized to avoid the duplication and fragmentation of efforts which impeded the effective use of a reliable quick count and a systematic qualitative analysis of the elections. International observers should modify their methodology on election night to ensure careful observation of the transmission of results and departmental level review of vote counts.
I. Introduction

Peaceful political changes have been rare in Nicaragua’s history. Historically, governments relied on coercion and fraud to maintain power, and opposition groups invited outsiders, either the United States or its enemies, to strengthen their position. After a four-decade reign by the Somoza family dynasty, the revolution led by the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) toppled the government of Anastasio Somoza Debayle on July 19, 1979. The Sandinista government of 1979-90 was marked by dramatic social change, a war between the U.S.-sponsored counter-revolutionary group known as the contras and the Sandinista Army, hyper-inflation, and political polarization. In 1984, the Sandinistas held their first elections. Some international observers deemed them satisfactory, but the elections were marred by the withdrawal of prominent opposition parties and by the rejection by the United States. The 1987 Central American Peace Plan set the stage for a negotiated end to the regional conflicts, beginning with Nicaragua.

In February 1989, in exchange for regional support for the democratization of the contras, President Daniel Ortega proposed moving up the elections scheduled for November 1990 to February 1990. The government invited the United Nations and the Organization of American States (OAS), along with former U.S. President Jimmy Carter and The Carter Center’s Council of Freely Elected Heads of Government, to observe all stages of the election and report their findings to the world. Eager to end the U.S. trade embargo and support for the contras, the Sandinistas wanted to carry out an open and honest election to erase any doubts about the legitimacy of their government. Likewise, the opposition looked to international actors to guarantee a process in which it did not trust the incumbent to act in good faith.

The 1990 Nicaraguan elections were pivotal because, for the first time in Nicaragua’s history, all major political parties stayed in the race and accepted the outcomes, and the transfer of power from one party to another was peaceful. The 1990 elections were unique in other ways as well. In a first for world history, a revolutionary government that had come to power as a result of a 20-year armed struggle voluntarily gave up the reins of power to its adversary. In a first for international organizations, the United Nations and OAS actively monitored and mediated elections in a sovereign member state. In Nicaragua, the principal observer groups devised a new model for long-term monitoring of the entire electoral process focusing on mediating disputes, opening the political space, and providing the guarantees needed to ensure that all parties play by the rules of the game.

Under President Violeta Chamorro’s tenure from 1990-96, Nicaragua made peace with the contras, dramatically reduced the size of its army from 96,000 to 15,000 troops, conquered hyper-inflation of 13,500 percent, and weathered a constitutional crisis in which the once-dominant office of president and the legislature established a balance of power.

Lingering distrust and continued political polarization influenced Nicaraguans again to look to external actors to provide the guarantees and confidence to carry out the Oct. 20, 1996, elections.

During those same years, Nicaragua made progress in developing democratic rules and institutions, but these were still incomplete in 1996. Lingering distrust and continued political polarization influenced Nicaraguans again to look to external actors to provide the guarantees and confidence to carry out the Oct. 20, 1996, elections. The Supreme Electoral Council (SEC) invited the OAS and several international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), including the Council of Freely Elected Heads of Government, to observe the elections a second time. In addition, a national observer group was formed, with the assistance of international NGOs, for the first time in Nicaragua.
II. The Pre-election Period

December Assessment Trip

The Council of Freely Elected Heads of Government’s activities in the 1996 elections began with an assessment trip in December 1995 by Dr. Jennifer McCoy, director of The Carter Center’s Nicaragua Elections Project, to follow up on the Council’s property initiatives in Nicaragua and to discuss the 1996 elections. During her trip, Dr. McCoy met with leaders of the major political parties, who told her that Nicaraguans viewed these elections as crucial to democratic consolidation, and they wanted international observers to help guarantee the process. Leaders of the principal parties, including Arnoldo Alemán and Daniel Ortega, wrote to President Carter asking him to lead a Council delegation to observe the October 1996 elections. Some considered the idea of a national observer group, but the political leaders believed the continued political polarization would make it difficult to view a domestic group as impartial. International actors alone could instill confidence in the process, as they had in 1990.

New Electoral Law

In late December 1995, the National Assembly approved a new electoral law with significant changes to the administration of the elections. First, the Supreme Electoral Council (SEC) was charged with a massive reorganization of the election bureaucracy. Following changes in the country’s administrative divisions, the law changed the number of electoral departments to 17 and doubled the number of individual polling stations from the 1990 elections. This required not only additional officials but also new cartography and revised voter assignments.

Second, with some parties fearing that Sandinista partisans still ran the electoral machinery, the new law required political parties to nominate candidates for posts in the 17 Departmental Electoral Councils and at the 8,995 polling stations. The SEC then would select officials from the party slates on a pluralist basis. The SEC itself had been reconstituted in mid-1995 when the National Assembly and the president agreed on an entirely new slate of magistrates. Dr. Mariana Fallos, who had successfully run the 1990 elections and served as president of the SEC since 1983, was re-elected as president. Dr. Rosa Marina Zelaya, former secretarygeneral of the SEC, was elected as magistrate. All the other magistrates were new.

In late December 1995, the National Assembly approved a new electoral law with significant changes to the administration of the elections.

Third, the Assembly mandated simultaneous elections for six different races: president and vice president, departmentally elected representatives to the National Assembly, nationally elected representatives to that same Assembly, representatives to the Central American Parliament, mayoralities, and municipal councils. (The 1995 constitutional reforms shortened the presidential term from six to five years and the mayoral and municipal council terms from six to four years so that in the future these races would not all be held simultaneously.) With 24 political parties, alliances, and popular organizations participating, each of the six separate ballots measured nearly 3 feet wide. The new requirement of a second round of voting if no presidential candidate received 45 percent of the vote created a potential extra financial and administrative burden.

Lastly, the new law provided for a mixed voter-registration system because efforts to provide every Nicaraguan with a new permanent identification card (cédula) could not be completed in time for the 1996 elections. In 119 municipalities, eligible voters were to apply for and receive a cédula or a temporary document (documento supletorio). In 26 municipalities in the country’s mountainous central corridor, where access was difficult and security was threatened by armed
bandits, voters registered over four weekends in June and July and received the traditional voter identification card (ficha civil) in an ad hoc registration process. Initially, the mixed system proved controversial not only in Nicaragua but also among conservative Republicans in the U.S. Congress, who felt the ad hoc registration system would discriminate against peasants who were expected to support Arnoldo Alemán's Alianza Liberal (AL). In fact, this mixed, ad hoc registration method proved much easier and faster than the new cédula method. As a result, many more people registered than expected.

The new law immediately prompted SEC President Fiallos to resign in February 1996 because he feared it would produce an inexperienced and politicized election authority incapable of carrying out the complicated elections. In late March of that year, the National Assembly elected Dr. Zelaya as the new president. As feared by Dr. Fiallos, the Departmental Electoral Councils were not appointed until April, only six months before the elections, and the polling station officials were chosen only weeks before the elections. Consequently, there was little time for the new officials to be trained and to learn how to manage an extraordinarily complex electoral process.

March Assessment Trip

In March 1996, Dr. David Carroll, associate director of LACP; Professor McConnell, director of the field office for the Nicaraguan Elections Project; and Dr. McCoy traveled to Nicaragua for a second pre-electoral trip (see Appendix 1 for the list of Carter Center Pre-election Delegations). This mission consisted of five full days of meetings with all the major presidential candidates and pre-candidates, the Supreme Electoral Council, the Cardinal, the Minister of Finance, the Supreme Court, National Assembly leaders, party and civic leaders, members of the press, and international organizations.

At this point, the parties expressed primary concerns on two issues: 1) candidate qualification and alliance building, and 2) voter registration and the possible disenfranchisement of voters. Additional concerns included possible bias in registration, capability and impartiality of election personnel, security, and campaign finance.

Constitutional reforms in mid-1995 created three requirements for presidential candidates which became controversial in the 1996 elections: 1) candidates for president must resign any ministerial or mayoral position one year prior to the elections; 2) candidates must not have renounced Nicaraguan citizenship to hold citizenship in another country, and 3) no relative of the sitting president could run for president in the subsequent term. As a result, Alvaro Robelo, Harold Montealegre, and Eden Pastora were disqualified for having dual citizenship, and Antonio Lacayo was disqualified for being the son-in-law of President Violeta Chamorro. Nevertheless, 23 candidates for presidency, representing 35 political parties (some in alliances), were registered and approved during the May fill-in period, reflecting the continued fragmentation of the party system.

The criteria for disqualifying candidates, known as the prohibitors, partially caused a protracted constitutional crisis in 1995, where the executive and legislative branches could not agree on the disqualifiers, particularly the prohibition of relatives of the sitting president. The final constitutional agreement in mid-1995 left in place the prohibitions, but these subsequently were appealed to the Supreme Court. When the Supreme Court declined to rule on the constitutionality of the prohibitions, the SEC was forced to make a decision itself. This awkward political decision took considerable time and attention.

Voter Registration and the June Pre-election Mission

From June 7-11, 1996, the Council of Freely Elected Heads of Government sponsored an eight-member international delegation led by Council member and former Ecuador President Osvaldo Hurtado to observe the second weekend of the ad hoc voter registration process (see Appendix 1 for the list of Carter Center Pre-election Delegations). The delegation visited 45 polling stations, called junta receptora de votos (JRVs), in the departments of Jinotega, Matagalpa, and the North Atlantic Autonomous Region, and Dr. McConnell observed an additional 12 stations on the first and last weekends of registration. They concluded that overall election workers had been well-trained and were knowledgeable.
able about registration procedures. Poll watchers were observed in each of the registration sites, primarily by the AL and FSLN, but also by the PRN, PRONAL, and the FNC. Turnout during registration was high, and the SEC’s civic education campaign appeared to have served its purpose well.

An impressive 2,421,067 citizens registered to vote in the 1996 Nicaraguan elections, some 400,000 more than the initial estimate based on the flawed 1995 census. The SEC planned for these voters to receive one of the following types of voter documents for use on election day:

Cédulas (about 1 million)—new permanent plastic photo ID cards that, among other purposes, could be used for voting. A 1993 law charged the SEC to produce the database and to manufacture and deliver these cards. As early as July 1995, the SEC knew it would not be capable of producing a cédula for every eligible citizen in time for the 1996 national elections. Due to security problems and to access difficulty to remote regions of the country, the SEC proposed to use the traditional form of walk-in registration over several weekends in 26 municipalities in those regions and to strive to complete the cédula process in the other 119 municipalities in the country.

Documentos Supletorios (about 1 million)—substitute paper voter documents valid for the 1996 elections only, to be issued to those cédula applicants whose applications had too many errors to be completed in time for the Oct. 20 elections (for example, where the person did not possess a birth certificate or the person had changed address).

Libretas Civicas (about 352,000)—temporary paper voter documents, similar to the documentos supletorios, issued over the course of four weekends of ad hoc registration in June and July 1996 in 26 municipalities in the interior of the country, where there were serious security or access problems.

Security posed problems in the region covered by the ad hoc registration because 400 armed bands and groups of rearmed contras and soldiers roamed the area, primarily motivated by economic concerns and secondarily by political issues.

Constancias—new voter documents, not mentioned in the electoral law, created by the SEC on the day before and day of the election for those citizens who had registered but not yet received either a cédula or a documento supletorio. All eligible voters in the 26 municipalities who registered to vote in the ad hoc process in June re-
ceived their voter ID cards at the moment of registration. Those citizens in the remaining 189 municipalities had to go through a multi-step process of application and verification to receive a voter document.

Security posed problems in the region covered by the ad hoc registration because 400 armed bands and groups of reamed contras and soldiers roamed the area, primarily motivated by economic concerns and secondarily by political issues. Both the International Commission for Support and Verification (COSG-CIAV) and the Tripartite Commission (the Catholic Church, the government, and the CIAV) reported that the human rights situation had improved since 1993 and that the violence had changed from politically motivated in 1990-93 to common crime in 1994-96. Although the Army worked with the Catholic Church to try to negotiate temporary cease-fires for the electoral period, they were not entirely successful and consequently beefed up security patrols for the registration period and election day.

Both the AL and the FSLN, as well as many smaller parties, had raised concerns with the SEC about security. For example, the FSLN in particular said their poll watchers and supporters were intimidated and thus stayed home. Although the delegation neither saw any overt signs of intimidation nor received reports of any such incidents on the second week of registration, they learned several incidents did occur during the course of the ad hoc registration. Notably, the kidnappings of an election observer and a group of election officials by armed bands contributed to the climate of insecurity.

The main problems witnessed by the delegation were logistical and administrative. In some cases, registration materials arrived late or ran out, causing temporary suspension of registration, and the locations of the registration sites sometimes required citizens to walk long distances to register. Upon its return to Managua, the delegation reported its findings to the SEC, which subsequently announced its intentions to hold a third weekend of registration in order to correct the materials problem and to relocate some of the JRVs. The SEC opened 18 new JRVs, relocated 45 others, and even held a fourth weekend in targeted locations (see Appendix 2 for the Council of Freely Elected Heads of Government’s June 11 Statement). Both the AL and the FSLN reported they were generally satisfied with the ad hoc registration.

Cedulación

Citizens were allowed to apply for a cédula until July 22, 1996, and cédulas were manufactured until Aug. 22. Problems with the laminating plastic, arduous cross-checking of data complicated by illiteracy, inaccurate or incomplete civil registries, and scarce resources caused delays in production. Consequently, only half of the 2 million applications resulted in the production of cédulas. The rate of delivery of these documents into the hands of the voters was slower still. By the end of August, only about 650,000 documents had been delivered, reflecting a serious bottleneck in the delivery system at the municipal level.

In response, the SEC devised a plan of entrega masiva, an intensive phase of voter document delivery that also would provide an opportunity for the delivery of documents suplmentarios. On a cascading schedule that spread throughout the country from Managua to the Pacific Coast regions, to the mountainous interior, and to the Atlantic Coast, cédulas and documentos suplentarios were delivered between Sept. 13-26 to polling stations where citizens were assigned to vote.

A number of difficulties arose with this delivery process, including delays in printing the documentos suplentarios and several postponements in the schedule. Some citizens expressed disappointment in receiving a documento supletorio rather than a cédula, and a handful refused to accept it. In some cases, citizens arrived to pick up their documents only to discover they had been reassigned to new JRVs because the number of registrants at their initial sites had exceeded the 400 maximum voters allowed by the electoral law.
Others who came on the first day found their documents had not yet arrived.

Nationwide, the entrega masiva delivered 856,000 of the 1 million manufactured cédulas. In addition, 600,000 of the 1 million documents suplétorios were delivered by Sept. 26. However, there were discrepancies by region, with Atlantic Coast regions having a much higher proportion of documents undelivered.

**Delivery of Voter Documents**
*(Through the end of the entrega masiva, Sept. 26, 1996)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document</th>
<th>No. Produced</th>
<th>No. Delivered (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Libreta Cívica</td>
<td>352,429</td>
<td>352,429 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cédula</td>
<td>1,039,435</td>
<td>856,603 (84.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Documento</td>
<td>1,050,795</td>
<td>595,748 (56.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suplétorio</td>
<td>2,411,629</td>
<td>1,804,780 (74.8%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Supreme Electoral Council

In order to put the remaining documents into the hands of voters, election officials continued to deliver documents door-to-door in each municipality after the entrega masiva (intensive campaign). President Chamorro called on her cabinet to lend its full support to the Electoral Council to ensure that the voter documents and the election materials could be delivered in time, and the Ministry of Education lent teachers and students to help deliver the voter documents until Oct. 19. Although the SEC created the alternative of the constancia at the last minute to try to ensure that all eligible voters could vote, some undetermined number of voters did not receive documents and thus were prohibited by law from voting.

**Voter Registration List (El Padrón)**

The list of registered voters, or padrón electoral, was compiled from applications for voter documents. Citizens were asked to go to their polling places on June 10 to verify that indeed they were listed on the electoral register and that the data on the list and the voter document were correct. More than 70 percent of the voters did so, and in the process, a number of errors were uncovered. The SEC extended the period for verification until July 15 to try to catch the remaining 30 percent of voters and to rectify the errors found.

A preliminary version of the padrón was published on July 22, and parties were given an opportunity to review and make objections to it. The SEC received no objections, and it published a final version on Oct. 1, with objections possible until Oct. 12.

The SEC also conducted an internal audit of the accuracy of the padrón in the first two weeks of October, the results of which were not made public. The Inter-American Institute for Human Rights' Center for Electoral Assistance (CAPEL) provided technical support for the audit, and the OAS monitored the effort. Preliminary analyses of typical errors in the padrón indicated three main problems: omissions, false inclusions, and errors in data. Of these, the political parties expressed primary concern with omissions of registered voters from the list. However, Article 42 of the electoral law allowed the president of the polling station to admit a voter if he/she had a valid voter document with an address in that precinct, even if he/she did not appear on the list. In addition, Article 122 allowed citizens to vote at the discretion of the JRV president even if there were errors and discrepancies between the data on the list and on the voter document. While the two articles caused some concern because they gave significant discretion to the JRV president, they also compensated for problems with the voter list.

**The Campaign Period and the August Pre-election Mission**

The official campaign started Aug. 1, though candidates had been campaigning informally since the filing deadline in late May. From Aug. 30-Sept. 5, the Council sponsored a fourth pre-electoral trip led by Council member and former Uruguay President Luis Alberto Lacalle to assess the campaign conditions, delivery of voter identification cards, and preparations for election day (see Appendix 1 for the list of Carter Center Pre-election Delegations). The team observed campaign rallies in the departments of Granada and Carazo and met with presidential candidates and representatives from five political parties, magistrates
of the Supreme Electoral Council, the Army chief, representatives from the national observer group Ética y Transparencia (ET), and other international observer groups (see Appendix 3 for President Lacalle’s Sept. 3 statement).

In a positive contrast to the 1990 campaign, the 1996 campaign was extremely peaceful, and the parties had the opportunity to hold their rallies without harassment.

With two months remaining in the electoral process, the polls indicated that, despite the presence of 24 presidential candidates, the majority of the support was going to two candidates representing the best-organized parties on polar ends of the political spectrum: former Sandinista President Daniel Ortega and former Managua Mayor Arnoldo Alemán of the AL. The remaining 21 candidates each had less than 3 percent support in the polls and represented the fragmented political center of Nicaragua.

In a positive contrast to the 1990 campaign, the 1996 campaign was competitive and uncensored, though many newspapers and radio stations remained quite partisan in their coverage. Although Mr. Ortega and Mr. Alemán rejected invitations for a public debate, the other candidates campaigned hard and participated in numerous televised debates and public forums. In an unprecedented effort by a broad swath of civil society, all parties, except the Liberals, signed a “Commitment to a Minimum Agenda for National Development” which encouraged more substantive campaign debate and outlined an agenda for the new government. The Liberals opted not to sign the document because they felt it would limit their ability to run an independent campaign.

Mr. Alemán campaigned with the slogan “the change is coming” and with a platform promising respect for private property, job creation, and giving land titles to thousands of urban and rural poor who had received property under the Ortega and Chamorro governments’ land reforms. Mr. Ortega revamped his own and his party’s image by moving toward the center, acknowledging past Sandinista mistakes, committing himself to a market economy, and recruiting a business magnate and rancher as his running mate. He campaigned with the slogan “government for all,” and his television spots sent feel-good messages promising to unite all Nicaraguans.

As election day approached and polls showed Mr. Ortega catching up to Mr. Alemán, tensions between the Sandinistas and Liberals increased. The campaign remained violence-free, but each candidate warned of a return to a dark and dangerous past if the other won. The Liberals referred to Sandinista revolutionaries as “tyrants, terrorists, and snakes” who had ruined the country economically and morally. The Sandinistas accused the Liberals of being “somocistas” who would bring back the injustices against which the Sandinistas had struggled long and hard. As the campaign closed, both Cardinal Obando y Beato and President Chamorro indirectly indicated their preferences in the election by warning against a victory by Mr. Ortega.

Technical rather than political problems dominated the list of concerns among political parties and international observers.

Technical rather than political problems dominated the list of concerns among political parties and international observers. The delivery of voter identification documents continued to be slow. Less than one month before the elections, almost 10 percent of voters had yet to receive documents. Delays in printing the ballots raised fears that the SEC could not deliver them in time for the elections.
Campaign financing was a concern primarily for the smaller parties. These political parties complained they did not receive public election funds in time to campaign fully. According to the new electoral law, political parties were to receive 15 percent of the SEC’s budget for campaign expenses. However, two disputes caused a delay in the delivery of funds: 1) whether the 15 percent should be calculated on the basis of the national portion of the SEC’s budget or should also include the international donations which was almost half of the SEC’s budget, and 2) which parties had legal standing in the National Assembly and thereby qualified for financing under different terms than newly recognized parties. Before the elections, the SEC satisfactorily resolved both issues. However, the parties remained obligated to repay the public campaign financing if they failed to win deputy positions in the new National Assembly. This meant that 14 parties who failed to win legislative seats would be required to repay up to $150,000 each.

All of these concerns ran deep enough that a proposal to postpone the elections was introduced in the National Assembly the month before the elections. The government, the Cardinal, and the observers widely opposed the proposal as being costly and disruptive. Although the proposal ultimately failed, it emphasized the uncertainty about electoral preparedness. However, importantly, the political parties did not attribute the problems to any political motive of the SEC but instead cited scarce resources, a centralized and bureaucratic Electoral Council, and political delays in decision-making in the National Assembly as the reasons for the postponement.
III. The Election and the Council’s Observations

On Oct. 20, 1996, 1,849,362 Nicaraguans (76.59 percent of the registered voters) cast their ballots in a peaceful election that allowed for an orderly transfer of power from one civilian government to another.

The Council of Freely Elected Heads of Government sent 47 observers from nine countries to monitor Nicaragua’s elections, including election experts, former government officials, doctors, business leaders, and foundation executives. Participating Council members were former Presidents Osvaldo Hurtado of Ecuador, Oscar Arias of Costa Rica, and Jimmy Carter of the United States. Former Presidents Patricio Aylwin of Chile, Carlos Andrés Pérez of Venezuela, and Fernando Belaúnde Terry of Peru sent personal representatives. Former Secretary of State James Baker joined President Carter as the mission’s bipartisan co-leader. Mr. Baker’s assistant secretary of state, the Hon. Bernard Aronson; Dr. Robert Pastor, director of The Carter Center’s Latin American and Caribbean Program (LACP); and Dr. Jennifer McCoy, director of The Carter Center’s Nicaragua Elections Project, rounded out the leadership group.

Preparations for Election Observation

The Council delegation arrived in Managua several days before the elections to be briefed on the electoral law, the campaign, voting procedures, the vote count, and their roles as international observers. Plenary sessions included a frank assessment of the election process from Ing. Callejas Dusken, one of five Delegation leaders emphasized that the candidates with whom they had spoken confirmed their willingness to respect the results of the election on Sunday, providing that election day procedures were satisfactory and the vote count honest.

Magistrates on the Supreme Electoral Council; a roundtable of prominent centrist presidential hopefuls, all of whom publicly acknowledged the campaign had been of acceptable quality; a discussion with a representative from Erica Y Traspantancia (ET), a national observer group; sharing information with leaders from the Organization of American States (OAS) and European Union (EU) international observer teams; and meetings with the vice presidential candidates and campaign managers from both the FSLN and the AL, the two political contenders leading the electoral race in national opinion polls.

Delegation leaders summarized their assessment of the pre-electoral process in a press conference on the afternoon of Oct. 18. They emphasized that the candidates with whom they had spoken confirmed
their willingness to respect the results of the election on Sunday, providing that election day procedures were satisfactory and the vote count honest. They noted the logistical preparations for this complex election had been difficult and slow, and they urged Nicaraguans to pick up their voter identification cards in the municipal registration office and to go to the polls. They accurately anticipated that with six ballots there could be delays on election day, and they asked Nicaraguans to be patient. They also stressed that in addition to international and national observers, party poll watchers and the voters themselves would monitor the voting stations to assure any attempts to manipulate the outcome would be detected.

“We believe that the political parties had the opportunity to get their message to the people, and conditions now exist for Nicaraguans to freely choose their leaders,” President Carter noted.

To counterbalance a remark by State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns implying that a Sandinista victory was undesirable and might be unacceptable to the United States, delegation leaders assured Nicaraguans, “We will support whomever you choose as your leaders in free and fair elections.”

The following day, the majority of Council delegates headed for the field. Traveling by airplane, motorized canoe, and four-wheel-drive vehicles, they would observe the elections in 14 of Nicaragua’s 17 geographic regions (called departments or autonomous regions). Teams covered important cities as well as rural villages and gave extra attention to the mountainous zones where bandits still operated and the political climate for elections was less secure (see Appendix 4 for the list of Regions Visited by Council Delegates).

Upon arrival in their assigned territories, delegates met with local electoral officials and members of OAS observation teams stationed in the region. Where appropriate, they consulted the CNAN, the police, or army personnel regarding security issues. Some groups also met with political parties. In one

Delegation leaders meet with the Ética y Transparencia Board on Oct. 19. Council member and former Ecuador President Oswaldo Hurtado (left) greets them.
location, along the Rio Coco on Nicaragua's remote northern border with Honduras, the Council joined forces with the Center for Democracy.

In Managua, the leadership team met collectively and individually with key leaders from Nicaragua's politics and society. To discuss security for the elections, and the prospects for democratic civil-military relations, they met with Gen. Joaquín Cuadra and Police Chief Franco Montealegre. They visited then-President Violeta Chamorro to congratulate her on a strong presidential term and to discuss plans for the transition in government. The board members of ET offered their perspectives as important intellectuals, NGO leaders, and businesspeople. Several Council delegates conversed with Cardinal Obando y Bravo, head of the Catholic church in Nicaragua and the nation's most prominent religious leader.

The delegates then met with the presidential candidates from the FSLN and the AL, and the candidate from the Camino Cristiano (Christian Way), who ultimately took a distant third place in the presidential election. By the end of the day, the group had gained a strong idea of the state of the electoral preparations, and they spoke with the president of Nicaragua's Supreme Electoral Council. Their pre-

James Baker, Jimmy Carter, Rosa Maria Zelaya, Violeta Chamorro, and Roberto Rivero meet at the SEC Counting Center in Managua on Oct. 19.

election assessment ended with discussions with members of the diplomatic corps and international observers from the OAS, the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI), and the International Republic Institute (IRI), the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), and the Center for Democracy.

Election Day Observation

On election day, delegation members arose early to observe the opening of the polls around the country. They visited polling sites throughout the day to

James Baker greets FSLN candidate Daniel Ortega on Oct. 19 as President Carter looks on.
Matagalpa, Muy Muy, Jinotepe, and La Dalia teams congregate before returning to Managua.

evaluate the voting process and the political climate. At closing time, they observed vote counts, many of which continued late into the night. The delegates visited one or two more polling stations to collect results and then reported those results to the mission headquarters in Managua. Although few observers accompanied the election officials when they brought in the results to the counting centers, the following morning, some observers visited Departmental Counting Centers (CDCs) and spoke with local electoral authorities before returning to Managua for a joint debriefing and exchange of views with other Council teams. In two departments—Managua and Matagalpa—delegates observed general disorder in the counting centers in the reception of ballots. In Matagalpa, party poll watchers complained to Council delegates that they had not been allowed to enter the counting centers.

Council observers generally expressed enthusiasm about the election process. Together, they had visited over 200 polling stations, encountering few insurmountable problems on the day of the elections. All of the polling stations had political party poll watchers, with participation rates by FSLN and AL poll watchers averaging about 90 percent. Domestic observers from ET were present in approximately one-third of the polling stations visited, although ET reported the
Delegates Jay Plattke, Bernard Arismon, Jimmy Carter, Oscar Arias, Jennifer McCoy (background), and James Baker visit a JRV before opening on Oct. 20.

The national average as significantly higher and, according to their reports, included many remote JRVs that were visited by few international delegations. In Puerto Cabezal, Council delegates observed voter intimidation, but nowhere did they find significant security problems.

Indebt ink was correctly applied to voters’ thumbs to prevent them from voting twice. Proper measures to assure voter secrecy were in place in all but one of the sites visited (see Appendix 5 for the Council Observer Forms).

In about two-thirds of the voting sites visited, party poll watchers and national observers reported no problems, and in almost all others, they reported only insignificant problems.

In about two-thirds of the voting sites visited, party poll watchers and national observers reported no problems, and in almost all others, they reported only insignificant problems that would not affect the election results. A few significant problems were reported in six JRVs, and only one site had many significant problems.

The most commonly observed problem was long lines, especially early in the morning. Late delivery of materials delayed the opening of many polling stations, and the SEC decreed that every station should remain
Nicaraguans wait in line to vote at a JRV on election day.

open the full 11 hours regardless of the time the polling station opened. Some sites had personnel shortages due to the creation of additional polling sites late in the process to comply with a section of the law limiting the number of voters at a given site to 400. Others, at a moment's notice, had to replace election officials who did not appear for work. The SEC reported that only 11 of the nearly 9,000 polling stations failed to open. The anticipated problem of voters being turned away for lack of documents or omission from the voter list apparently did not materialize. The delegation observed only 12 cases of voters not being allowed to vote due to either arriving at the wrong polling station or not having a document. However, in Puerto Caboñas, delegates learned that only about 65 percent of registered voters had received their documents by election day, with the rest forced to rely on the constancies or not vote at all.

Press statements given by ET, the OAS, and the EU on the afternoon and evening of election day corroborated the experiences of the Council. The OAS reported that only 30 percent of the JRVs opened under completely normal conditions, but by late afternoon, 70 percent were operating normally. Both the OAS and the EU expressed general satisfaction with the process early on election night.

With 4,200 observers, ET reported finding party poll watchers at 98 percent of the operating JRVs and conditions for a secret vote at 95 percent of the JRVs.

**Election Night and the Preliminary Vote Count**

Ballots initially were counted at the voting sites, where tally sheets were completed and copies filled out for each party poll watch. The tally sheets recorded not only the total votes for each party but also the number of ballots issued, the number of ballots cast, the number of valid votes, and the number of null votes for each of the six elections. Two factors—the absence of carbon paper and the complexity of the

A poll worker explains the six ballots to a voter on election day.
Council's leaders held a press conference on the afternoon of Oct. 21 to report their impressions. President Carter congratulated the Nicarguan people for their enthusiasm and determination to participate in democratic politics, which had resulted in a voter turnout rate that was high by interna-

tally sheets—contributed to mistakes in recording information.

Information from the tally sheets then was summarized on a form called (for historical reasons) a "telegram," and election officials took the telegram to the nearest office of the telephone company where the results were dictated over the telephone to the Na-
tional Counting Center in Managua. The Center used this information to arrive at a preliminary vote total. Results were slow to come in because of the delayed closing of the polls. The SEC announced the first results at 3 a.m., with 2 percent of JRVs reporting that Arnoldo Alemán was ahead with 50 percent of the vote to Mr. Ortega's 40 percent. Mr. Alemán claimed victory at 4:30 a.m., with less than 10 percent of the votes counted, provoking strong reaction by the FSLN. On the morning of Oct. 21, several interna-
tional delegations gave statements about the election. The EU expressed its hope that "all political forces would accept the results of a transparent election," and the U.S. governmental delegation congratulated Nicaragua for a "peaceful and successful election day."

Based on positive reports from its delegates, the

Two factors—the absence of carbon paper and the complexity of the tally sheets—contributed to mistakes in recording information.

Rational standards. He praised the dedication of many election officials, and he noted that although the government had faced serious challenges in distrib-
ting voter documents, the vast majority of Nicaraguans had enjoyed the opportunity to vote.

However, President Carter's remarks were qualified with reference to administrative problems, including delays in receiving election materials, long voter lines, and late openings of many JRVs. Those administrative problems would multiply in the coming days during the process of collecting the election materials and counting the vote. They would lead the FSLN and several smaller political parties to conclude that the election results were being manipulated, a

Council Delegate Lenny Trovay watches as poll workers and fiscales (party poll watchers) tally ballots on election night.
change that the Council delegation investigated in an unprecedented post-election observation (see Appendix 6 for the Council’s Oct. 21 Statement).

By early afternoon on Oct. 21, however, the parties began to report discrepancies in the vote count. At 1:40 p.m., the SEC reported that Mr. Aleemán had gained 48.26 percent, and Mr. Ortega had won 39.1 percent of the vote, with nearly half of the JRV’s reporting. Quick counts by the OAS, the EU, and ET generally confirmed the SEC’s preliminary results, though ET’s data published on Oct. 24 gave the FSLN higher returns than had SEC’s. ET showed the AL and FSLN with 49.22 percent and 40.87 percent, respectively, with a plus or minus 1.67 percent margin of error.

Quick counts by the OAS, the EU, and ET generally confirmed the SEC’s preliminary results, though ET’s data published on Oct. 24 gave the FSLN higher returns than had SEC’s.
following morning when he could explain in a press conference the concerns of the parties and the actions undertaken to address them. He also committed several Carter Center staff to remain in the country following the elections.

Delegation leaders were concerned the FSLN and smaller parties had not yet acknowledged the legitimacy of the elections and their results. To address this concern, the Council mounted the most intensive post-election observation it had ever undertaken.

Delegation leaders were concerned the FSLN and smaller parties had not yet acknowledged the legitimacy of the elections and their results. To address this concern, the Council mounted the most intensive post-election observation it had ever undertaken. Nine delegation members were asked to remain in Nicaragua to observe the official count and pursue any further concerns raised by political parties. This decision was validated several days later when President Chamorro invited the remaining international observers to her office to make an emotional appeal to see the process to fruition.
IV. Post-election Observations

The Official Vote Count

The Electoral Law called for a review of the vote count at the regional level in the Departmental Counting Centers (CDCs). It is these results, rather than the telegrams, that became the official election results. Because of this, the parties soon turned their attention away from the telegrams and to the departmental reviews. International observers did likewise, and in a joint statement, IRI, IFES, NDI, and The Carter Center assured the Nicaraguan people they still were on the job.

The election materials—ballots, tally sheets, and telegrams, as well as the opening and closing acts by which the JRVs are constituted—were collected at the CDCs on election night, where they were sorted and filed. Tally sheets whose totals were challenged by poll watchers were flagged for investigation. The arithmetic on all tally sheets was checked and, if necessary, corrected by accountants under the supervision of electoral branch personnel.

In most departments, election officials and party poll watchers together decided to reopen the ballot bags and re-count the ballots where there was a numerical error of more than 10.

In some departments, the number of "inconsistencies," or errors in the documentation of results, was far higher than expected. Election officials began a massive review with the help of additional accountants and party poll watchers. Procedures for the review had not been adequately specified under the law and had to be developed in response to concrete problems as they arose. In most departments, election officials and party poll watchers together decided to reopen the

They found the biggest problems in the departments of Managua and Matagalpa. 
... Fourteen percent of the JRVs in Managua and 11 percent in Matagalpa were annulled.

Concerned about the growing evidence of irregularities and creeping polarization between the political parties, Carter Center Nicaragua Elections Project Director Jennifer McCoy returned to Nicaragua in early November to personally gauge the situation and to be present for the announcement of the official results.

The review process was slow, and in some departments, the parties and officials could not agree even on the procedure, resulting in incomparable results and increased tension in some areas. The SEC gave some guidelines but only after several of the departments had already begun their own reviews. In the end, the SEC allowed each department to choose their own procedure.

Official results were not reported until Nov. 8. Called "provisional" results because the SEC had not yet considered appeals, the totals gave AL candidate Arnoldo Alemán a first-round victory with 51.03 percent of the vote to Sandinista candidate Daniel Ortega's 37.75 percent, a larger spread than the preliminary results. Camino Cristiano candidate Guillermo Ossorio took third with 4.10 percent of the
vote. This announcement addressed questions about whether the review had been conducted or how proxy of the JRV had been annulled in the process, contributing to a growing sentiment in the FSLN and some smaller parties that the elections had been badly administered and that some fraud may have occurred. The Sandinistas held a peaceful rally at which Daniel Ortega called the results legal but unknowable and criticized the Catholic Church for having prejudiced the electorate via thinly disguised anti-Sandinista remarks made just prior to election day.

The Carter Center issued a press statement on Nov. 15 congratulating the parties and the people for pursuing their concerns through legal channels, but it also expressed disappointment that the SEC had not released information to explain the corrections made during the review process. The Carter called on the SEC to release that information as soon as possible so Nicaraguans and international observers could evaluate the parties' appeals and so Nicaraguans would have confidence in the official outcomes (see Appendix 7 for The Carter Center's Nov. 15 Statement).

Sources of Irregularities
What explains the high number of errors in the tally sheets and the necessity of amendments? As previously noted, the complexity of the sheet itself resulted in the transposition of some numbers, giving votes to the wrong party. On others, information had been miscopied, an error which could have been avoided had carbonless copy paper been a feasible alternative. In other cases, improper training or low educational levels of poll workers may have augmented the number of errors. Workers' sheer exhaustion was also a factor. Many election workers had spent the night before the elections in the JRV guarding election materials, worked the entire day of the elections under great tension, and then stayed up all election night counting ballots. There also may have been individual instances of outright fraud at low levels that would not affect the outcome of the presidential race.

Monitoring by party poll watchers should have prevented this, but in retrospect, it is clear that few poll watchers were sufficiently vigilant. Many undertook the work simply to earn money in an economy marked by widespread unemployment. Others were inadequately trained by the political parties. Furthermore, in regions where bands continue to operate and nightfall brings risk, some poll watchers reportedly went home before the vote was counted. Council delegates observed that some poll watchers were teenagers and sometimes new recruits who could barely recall what party they represented.

The transmission of results was particularly problematic. Poll watchers who accompanied the transport of the telegrams often were not allowed to enter the telephone offices where the results were phoned into Managua. Also, international observers did not stay to observe the entire count, to accompany the results when transported to the telephone offices and CDCs, or to observe the receipt and review of the ballots in the CDCs on election night.

In Managua and Matagalpa, the two largest departments and those with the highest number of problems, poor planning for the reception of voting materials at the CDCs also contributed to the disorder. Exhausted election workers arrived at the CDCs to turn in their materials only to discover long lines due to a shortage of personnel and due to the complex forms accompanying the process. In Managua, a riot ensued in which ballots and tally sheets were cast into the streets. To calm the public, the Managua CDC began accepting materials without filling out the tedious paperwork. In Matagalpa, election workers reportedly tired of waiting and sometimes abandoned their materials. The result was chaotic. Bags of election materials were piled to the ceiling in total disregard, requiring weeks of sorting before anyone knew what materials had been submitted. Not surprisingly, some ballot bags arrived without identification. In other cases, entire bags of ballots were delivered at all. In such instances, there was no option but to annul the results for the entire JRV.

The Council delegation sent observers to witness the three-week review process in the CDCs in key departments, including Managua and Matagalpa as well as six others (Rivas, Carazo, Granada, Masaya, Esteli, and Madriz). Professor Shelley McConnell, Carter Center representative in Nicaragua, met with the presidents of the regional electoral councils for both the north and south Atlantic Coast regions.
addition, Carter Center observers coordinated with other international observers from IRI, the Center for Democracy, USAID, and Hemisphere Initiatives to increase coverage to almost the entire country. These colleagues brought impressive skills and diverse analytical perspectives with which to understand rapidly unfolding events in an information-scarce environment. The OAS retained observers in every department, and Council observers consulted with them in the field. In the capital, they kept in constant contact with the SGC and political party leaders in order to track evolving complaints and any remedies offered. No other election process has been so intensely observed in the post-election period. Carter Center personnel provided important leadership in initiating coordination among the international observer teams, and Council delegates were requested by political parties to travel to various departments to hear their concerns.

Processing Appeals and Arriving at a Final Count

Nicaragua’s Electoral Law permits parties to file appeals concerning the elections, and about a dozen parties did so. The FSLN submitted a collection of documents totaling nearly 650 pages, by far the most extensive appeal. Carter Center staff reviewed all the appeals and met with FSLN leaders to try to better understand their allegations.

The Sandinistas made numerous charges regarding errors in the tally sheets, JRVs that should or should not have had their votes annulled, illegal constitution of some JRVs, last-minute personnel switches, and intimidation in the mountainous regions. Based on particularly extensive irregularities cited in Managua and Matagalpa, the FSLN demanded all six elections in those departments be declared null and void and new elections be held.

On Nov. 22, in a much-postponed and sparsely attended ceremony held near midnight, the SEC announced the outcome of the appeals and the final election results. The SEC had examined the appeals and remedied some problems. Nonetheless, it rejected the Sandinista demand for regional annulments on the grounds that the Electoral Law only permits elections to be annulled if the problems can be shown to have affected at least half of the registered voters in that election. As with the Nov. 8 announcement, and despite the Carter Center’s strong complaints on Nov. 15, the SEC said nothing about how the appeals had been processed, a matter of some concern since neither party poll watchers nor international observers were invited to witness that process. Also, the SEC did not use this opportunity to inform the public about the types and levels of problems encountered in its earlier review of the vote count.

The SGC named Arnoldo Aleman as the winning presidential candidate with 50.99 percent of the vote to Daniel Ortega’s 37.83 percent. In the legislature, the Liberals won 42 seats, and the Sandinistas won 35 seats plus a special seat for Mr. Ortega as a losing presidential candidate with more than 1.5 percent of the vote. Camilo Cristano won a total of four seats, the Nicaraguan Conservative party won three seats (both included their presidential candidates), the National Project gained two, and six other parties gained one seat each. In the mayoral races, the popular vote showed only a 7 percent difference between the top two parties in the aggregate vote of all the races. Liberals captured 91 of the 145 mayorships, including the capital city of Managua, but Sandinistas took 52 mayorships, and two small parties each elected a mayor (see Appendix 9 for the Election Results).
The SEC eventually provided information on the number of annulled JRVs which allowed calculations that Mr. Alemán would indeed have won the elections in a single-round victory even if none of those votes had been cast for the Liberal Alliance (AL), a highly unlikely prospect.

The Interim Period

On Nov. 24, Mr. Ortega went on national television and, for the first time, publicly denounced the elections as fraudulent. He focused on the presidential race, arguing the level of annulment and errors had been high enough to introduce doubt regarding whether either candidate had obtained the 45 percent of the vote required to eliminate a second round. Mr. Ortega insisted a runoff should have been held, but he presented no new evidence to support his claim. Mr. Ortega acknowledged the political reality that President-elect Alemán would take office, but he contested the legitimacy of the election and would neither offer a concession speech nor shake Mr. Alemán’s hand in congratulations.

The Carter Center reviewed the FSLN appeal and gave the party every opportunity to come forward with evidence of fraud, but the party provided no hard evidence. The FSLN claimed the evidence was scattered and, rather than documenting systematic fraud, they believed the general disorder permitted fraudulent situations and made results of the election unknowable. The SEC eventually provided information on the number of annulled JRVs which allowed calculations that Mr. Alemán would indeed have won the elections in a single-round victory, even if none of those votes had been cast for the AL, a highly unlikely prospect. The presidential race was annulled in 510 (or 5.6 percent) of the polling stations, and the five other races were annulled in as many as 577 JRVs, mostly in Managua and Matagalpa. In a handful of towns, the mayoral races were very close, and enough of the JRVs had been annulled that the outcome could be questioned (see Appendix 1D for results on annulled votes). The SEC could have used sampling techniques to attempt to determine those outcomes more precisely, but the Sandinistas chose not to contest them, instead deciding to fight only over the presidential election.

Nicaragua now entered a dangerous moment of deep concern to the Council. In a successful election, all major parties accept the published results. In this case, however, the major opposition party (and several smaller parties) did not fully accept the results. Based on a thorough review, the Council concluded that, despite serious irregularities, the election by and large reflected the preferences of the Nicaraguan people and that Mr. Alemán was indeed the first-round presidential victor. They concluded Mr. Ortega’s allegations of significant fraud were not proven. President Carter spoke with both Mr. Ortega and Mr. Alemán via telephone on Dec. 4 to inform them of the Council’s conclusions before issuing a final statement on Dec. 6. He urged Mr. Ortega to recognize the presidential results and urged both leaders to work together to reform the electoral law and to develop a constructive relationship for the benefit of the country (see Appen-

[The delegation] concluded Mr. Ortega’s allegations of significant fraud were not proven. President Carter urged Mr. Ortega to recognize the presidential results and work together with Mr. Alemán to reform the electoral law and develop a constructive relationship for the benefit of the country.

The Sandinistas decided to acknowledge the Alemán government as the country’s legal authority but not as a legitimate one because of the number and nature of the irregularities. This questioning of the moral basis of the elections seemed to herald a return
to the past politics of confrontation, but the FSLN did not call for street protests. The Sandinistas told Carter Center observers they would take their seats at National Assembly members, mayors, city councilors, and Central American Parliament members. Nevertheless, Mr. Ortez’s refusal to meet with President-elect Alemán and shake his hand produced uncertainty about Nicaragua’s political stability.

That uncertainty was augmented by a dispute that arose over the formula for assigning seats in the legislature. Members of several political parties, including the FSLN, charged that the Electoral Law had been reinterpreted by the SEC in an internal memo published after the election results were known. These doubts were fed by the fact that the SEC’s reading of the law resulted in the election of the husband of the president of the SEC. The matter turned on the reading of an intricate section of the Electoral Law. Candidates who had lost under the SEC’s formula filed suit before the Appeals Court to stay the inauguration of the deputies in the disputed seats. The case ultimately came before the Supreme Court, where it was dismissed on the grounds that the FSLN can interpret the Electoral Law with the final and unappealable authority to declare election winners. Throughout this period, Professor McConnell met with the dissatisfied parties and the president of the SEC to encourage a constructive tone and peaceful resolution of the dispute.

In December, the outgoing legislature provoked a political crisis when a majority of its members, in a move reminiscent of the 1990 “parlamento” legislation by the Sandinistas assembly, decided to pass through eleventh-hour legislation before the Liberal government took office. Some agenda items, such as the municipalities law, were well-advanced in their formulation and simply constituted unfinished business. Others, such as a measure to appoint the head of the Central Bank and other agencies and to pre-empt the incoming president from making that choice, marked two attempts to limit the powers of the incoming government. The legislature also sought to award its members severance pay and to adjust the Electoral Law post-facts to eliminate political parties’ obligations to repay campaign financing received from the state. When some legislative leaders tried to block passage of these bills by boycotting the National Assembly, the legislature responded by removing absent members from their posts. Ultimately, the Supreme Court was called upon to decide whether the legislation passed by the legislature was valid. The Court ruled the bills unconstitutional.

The legislative crisis and dispute over the formula for assigning seats increased the uneasiness in Nicaragua, but both controversies were resolved by legal means through established institutions. The very fact that Nicaraguans felt comfortable appealing to constitutional remedies and the Supreme Court to adjudicate disputes over the balance of power marks an important sign of a deepening respect for the rule of law. The FSLN’s decree to accept the SEC’s ruling also signals an increased respect.

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The Council’s election observation mission came to a close when Professor McConnell attended both the legislative and the presidential inaugurations. The new National Assembly was inaugurated on Jan. 9, 1997, and after being sworn in by the Supreme Electoral Council, Assembly members elected their leaders. The Sandinistas proposed a multiparty directing led by an AL member. The Liberals proposed a slate exclusive of Sandinistas. The 36 FSLN Deputies walked out of the building in protest when the SEC ruled that the vote on the leadership would be done in public rather than by secret ballot. The FSLN charged that the Liberals intended to monopolize leadership positions and exclude the Sandinistas from their rightful quota of power, despite the fact that the
Liberals had not won a majority but rather had won only 7 percent more popular votes than the FSLN in the legislative races.

The following day, Mr. Alemán was inaugurated as president in a public ceremony which the Sandinistas did not attend. Within hours, however, Mr. Ortega agreed to meet face-to-face with President Alemán for the first time. At that meeting, the two men agreed on a common agenda for the days ahead. They agreed that small property holders should receive title to their land as soon as possible, and they established a commission to help strengthen the judicial branch, which might help speed the resolution of property disputes brought before the courts. If these agreements are implemented, they will be crucial in resolving what has been the most contentious issue in post-revolutionary politics—property rights. Finally, and most importantly from the perspective of the Council’s election observation mission, President Alemán and Mr. Ortega agreed the Electoral Law required reform.
V. Conclusions and Recommendations

The 1996 elections demonstrated Nicaraguans' faith and commitment to the democratic process as they turned out in large numbers to cast their ballots on Oct. 20. Nevertheless, the controversy over the vote results diminished public confidence in the electoral institution. A CID-Gallup poll published Dec. 19, 1996, indicated that 49 percent of the respondents believed the elections were honest, but a substantial 40 percent believed that some fraud had occurred. A Demoscopia poll conducted in December 1996 suggested that 66 percent of the respondents had little or no confidence in the Supreme Electoral Council, indicating the considerable challenge for the Supreme Electoral Council and political leaders before the 1998 Atlantic Coast elections.

The fact that the two largest parties together won 88 percent of the vote reflects an emerging biparty system, but one that is polarized around two ends of the ideological spectrum with a fragmented, weak center. The composition of the National Assembly, in which the Liberals fell short of an outright majority, implies that the government must sustain a coalition for normal legislation, and most likely will require Sandinista support to muster the 60 percent vote required for constitutional change.

The challenge will be to both the governing party and the opposition to constructively work together for the benefit of the nation. As Ética y Transparencia (ET) so aptly concludes, Nicaragua's history of polarization has inhibited the accumulation of positive experiences. Governments instead have eroded the good along with the bad as they have strived to reverse and blot out the record of their predecessors. It is time now for Nicaraguans to depart from this historical path.

The 1996 elections also demonstrated the growing commitment of Nicaraguan society to the rule of law. The fact that all political parties, candidates, and the population participated in an unprecedented three-week review and partial recount of the votes in a peaceful, patient, and legal manner is a remarkable achievement for a country with a history of such marked division and traumatic conflict. This respect for the legal process, along with the eager acceptance of all of the newly elected political candidates to assume their new posts, is an important basis for continued democratic development in Nicaragua.

The development of the national observer effort, ET, reflects both a positive development for Nicaraguan civil society, and the difficulties of national observation in a polarized society. ET was the only nonpartisan observer group capable of mounting a large observation on election day. With more than 4,200 observers, they were able to monitor half of the voting sites for the entire day. The survey forms filled out by their observers provided an excellent analysis of the qualitative aspects of the election, as well as a reliable quick count with a small margin of error. Mobilizing civil society to participate in this activity is a significant achievement.

Nevertheless, the problems of comprising a board of directors that would be at once pluralist and impartial proved to be difficult in such a polarized society. The president resigned when he was proposed as a future minister for one of the candidates, and the long process in obtaining agreement among board members meant that their final statement was delayed until February 1997. The quick count, though excellent, was not useful to mediate in the aftermath of the elections both because the organization was perceived as partial to one candidate, and because ET was constrained in divulging its results only to the SGC and the Cardinal.

We conclude that despite the serious shortcomings of these elections, they by and large reflected the preferences of the voters. Nevertheless, the fact that between 11 and 12 percent of the votes were nullified in the various elections (4.95-6.03 percent on the day of the election, and another 5.6-6.4 percent during the vote review), and that a dozen parties submitted appeals, indicates the need for a serious evaluation of the process before the 1998 Atlantic Coast elections. In particular, the cases where the number of votes nullified in the review process exceeded the difference between the winner and loser suggest that some
moral and even legislative races could have been affected by the irregularities. The fact that the FSLN chose to question only the outcome of the presidential race reflects the society's larger emphasis on presidential politics, even while decentralization increased the role of local officials and constitutional reform strengthened the role of the legislature in Nicaragua's democracy.

We want to thank the Supreme Electoral Council, the government of Violeta Chamorro, the political parties, and the people of Nicaragua for the warm reception and cooperation they always have shown us. We have been inspired and gratified by the devotion to the ideals of democracy we have witnessed in Nicaragua. In return, we would like to offer our own reflections about the lessons we have learned from our year-long observation and from our cumulative experience in Nicaragua in hopes of contributing to the improvement of the electoral process in Nicaragua, as well as to the methodology of international observation.

Electoral Law

Many of the constraints and challenges in the 1996 elections were a product of the new electoral law. We applaud the commitment of the SEC, President Alemán, and Daniel Ortega to reform this law. Specifically, our observation indicates the need for the following changes:

1. **Modify the method of choosing Departmental Electoral Council members and JRV officials** to avoid the problems of inexperienced, perceptions of partisan bias, and no-shows on election day. Officials should be chosen on the basis of explicit qualifications and with permanent terms for the Departmental Electoral Council members.

2. **Repeal and clarify the qualifications for candidates for elected offices** so that the SEC will not become embroiled in constitutional questions.

3. **Clarify the formulas used for distribution of legislative seats.** The current law is ambiguous and open to interpretation, which led to confusion and controversy in the 1996 elections.

4. **Clarify the conditions for challenging vote counts and the procedures for review and recounts.** The experiences of the 1996 elections were not anticipated in the Electoral Law, forcing election officials and party poll watchers to negotiate and improvis procedures.

5. **Clarify the conditions under which election can be rerun.** The law specified that elections could be nullified and rerun only if candidates cancel votes correspond to at least half of the registered voters in that election. Votes can be nullified only when (a) a JRV board is illegally constituted; (b) a JRV has been moved without authorization; or (c) election results are delivered beyond the specified time without justifiable cause. The law did not allow for the possibility that votes might be nullified for additional reasons, such as lost ballots and tally sheets or large discrepancies in counts. Furthermore, it did not anticipate situations in which the annulled votes were greater than the difference between the winner and loser, resulting in situations where the true result was unknowable.

6. **Clarify the rules for public financing of campaigns.** Particularly the formula for determining the amount of public funds and the requirements for reporting and expending funds. The current law encourages microparties with little chance of winning a legislative seat to launch presidential and legislative candidates, which leaves them with large bills to repay to the government.

**Election Administration and Procedures.**

The Supreme Electoral Council confronted and overcome many serious obstacles in the 1996 elections including: late approval of an ambiguous electoral law, an inadequate budget, change in the president only eight months before the elections, party delays in nominating election officials, and extremely complex elections. A number of lessons may be drawn from this experience:

1. **Professionalize the election bureaucracy** so that it may be better able to meet the new schedule of more frequent elections under the revised constitution. In particular, Departmental Electoral Council members should be permanent rather than temporary members appointed only months before an election and dismissed at the inauguration of the new government. This change would require the cooperation of the parties nominating the officials and reform to the
electoral law. Appoint JRV officials well in advance to allow time for adequate training.

2. Improve communication mechanisms between the levels of the election administration. Last-minute decisions about voter documents and polling stations with extended hours were difficult to communicate on election day from the SEC down to the JRV level. In particular, communication during the review process broke down when the SEC failed to provide clear guidelines to the departments, leading to confusion and conflict.

3. Provide full information to the public and to the parties. The SEC was very conscientious before the elections in communicating decisions to both the public and the political parties, but in the aftermath of the elections, that communication broke down. In announcing the voting results on Nov. 8 and Nov. 22, the SEC failed to explain its analysis and conclusions about the review and recounts and about the party appeals. It explained the method for assigning legislative seats only after the fact, when the media and the parties began to question it. The absence of full explanation to the public contributed to the confusion and perception of disorder, and probably did the most damage to undermining the credibility of the institution.

4. Improve the transmission of results. Public confidence in the election results began to unravel when discrepancies were discovered between the telegrams and the official tally sheets. The preliminary results transmitted by telephone and fax had so many errors that the National Counting Center could only report 87 rather than 100 percent of the returns. A careful comparison of the tally sheets, the original telegrams, and the copies of the telegrams recorded at the National Counting Center, as well as investigations into the procedures used by telephone company workers on election night, could reveal when errors occurred in the transmission process and whether there were any systematic patterns of bias in them. Party poll watchers and national and international observers need access to every step of the process.

5. Complete the codulation process before the 1998 Atlantic Coast elections. The slow delivery of voter documents in the Atlantic Coast region, despite having started the codulation process there first, indicates an urgent need to correct errors and complete the process there, and subsequently in the rest of the 26 municipalities with ad hoc registration.

6. Give full government backing to the Electoral Prosecutor to complete investigations into electoral crimes, including JRV officials who failed to appear for duty on election day. Such investigations—and if necessary, prosecutions—are necessary both to understand the range of the problems in the 1996 elections and to restore confidence in elections as a vital democratic institution.

International Observers

With each mission, international observers learn and accumulate experience. In Nyasa, we believed that more progress in national reconciliation and confidence-building had been reached since the 1990 elections than actually was the case. We underestimated the level of distrust remaining among the parties and the need for election mediation. On election night and the day following, several factors combined to unravel the process: slow transmission of results, premature claims of victory by Mr. Alén, and negative response by the FSNL, failure of observers to stay for the duration of the count and its transmission to CDCH and the National Counting Center, and human error in recording and transmitting the results.

As some international observers praised the process and offered congratulations to the apparent president-elect, the severity of the problems became clear, and several parties began to question the results. The Sandinistas, in particular, felt hurt by being labelled as sore losers and spoilers, while they were striving to document the seriousness of the irregularities and avoid setting a poor precedent for future elections. Their position hardened as they perceived a lack of attention from the SEC and the international community.

In 1990, the quick count of the United Nations provided early and accurate information that allowed the United Nations, the OAS, and the Council to confirm the official results and help both the winning and losing candidates have confidence in and acknowledge those results to their supporters in a peaceful acceptance of the outcome. In 1996, the ET and the OAS/EU each did a quick count, but the count
was not effectively used to calm the two main parties as it had in 1990.

International observers did stay for an unprecedented observation of the extensive vote review and partial recount, and the cooperation among the groups was a positive development. Nevertheless, the lack of coordination in the pre-electoral period and on election day, and the duplication of efforts among five different NGOs and one international governmental organization, each with field offices funded by USAID, meant that there was both wasted effort throughout the electoral process and an inability to conduct a systematic, large-scale qualitative and quantitative (quick count) observation which could provide the information needed to fully evaluate and mediate the elections. We recommend that USAID evaluate this experience in order to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of U.S.-funded electoral observation in the future.
Appendices
Appendix 1

Carter Center Pre-election Delegations

March 7-11, 1996
Dr. Jennifer McCoy, Director, Nicaragua Elections Project, The Carter Center
Dr. David Carroll, Associate Director, Latin American and Caribbean Program, The Carter Center
Professor Shelley McConnell, Director of Field Office, Nicaragua Elections Project, The Carter Center, Managua, Nicaragua

June 6-11, 1996
President Osvaldo Hurtado, Former President of Ecuador (1981-84); Member of the Council of Freely Elected Heads of Government
Dr. Jennifer McCoy, Director, Nicaragua Elections Project, The Carter Center
Ms. Elena Broitman, Democratic Professional Staff Member, U.S. House of Representatives International Relations Committee
Mr. Joaquin Daly, Representative of Council Member and Former Peru President Fernando Balade de Terry
Mr. Mark Kirk, Republican Professional Staff Member, U.S. House of Representatives International Relations Committee
Mr. Rodrigo Madrigal, Representative of Council Member and Former Costa Rica President Oscar Arias and Board Member of the Arias Foundation for Peace and Human Progress
Professor Shelley McConnell, Director of Field Office, Nicaragua Elections Project, The Carter Center, Managua, Nicaragua
Mr. Mike O’Callaghan, Former Governor of Nevada (1971-78); Chair of the Board of the Las Vegas SUN Newspaper

Aug. 29- Sept. 4, 1996
Dr. Luis Alberto Lacalle, Former President of Uruguay; Member of the Council of Freely Elected Heads of Government
Dr. Jennifer McCoy, Director, Nicaragua Elections Project, The Carter Center
Professor Shelley McConnell, Director of Field Office, Nicaragua Elections Project, The Carter Center, Managua, Nicaragua
Ms. Adrienne Scheid, Program Assistant, Nicaragua Elections Project, The Carter Center, Managua, Nicaragua
Appendix 2

Statement of Dr. Osvaldo Hurtado
Former President of Ecuador and Leader of the Delegation of the Council of Freely Elected Heads of Government
The Carter Center
Pre-electoral Mission to Nicaragua
June 11, 1996

On behalf of the Council of Freely Elected Heads of Government, a group of 23 hemispheric leaders based at The Carter Center in Atlanta, Georgia, I would like to introduce the delegation of international observers with whom I have worked this weekend to observe the ad hoc registration process.

Beside me is Rodrigo Madrigal, representative of former Costa Rican president Oscar Arias; Michael O'Callaghan, former governor of Nevada; Jennifer McCoy, director of The Carter Center’s election observation project; and Shelley McCutnell, The Carter Center’s representative in Nicaragua for the election period. Also joining our delegation were Joaquin Daly, representative of former Panamanian president Fernando Belaunde; and two members of the U.S. House of Representatives International Relations Committee staff, Mark Kirk (Republican) and Elisa Bromberg (Democrat).

The Council was invited by the Supreme Electoral Council and the principal political parties to observe the 1996 national elections, as we did in 1990. The purpose of this visit has been to observe the voter registration process. We will have another delegation during the official campaign period and a larger delegation for the Oct. 20 elections.

During this visit, we met with representatives of the FSLN and Alianza Liberal in Managua, 12 political parties in Matagalpa, members of the security forces and Electoral Council of Matagalpa, the Cardinals’ Verification Commission, government officials, and the Supreme Electoral Council. We spent two days in the Departments of Jinotega and Matagalpa where we observed the ad hoc registration process in Wadala, Rancho Grande, Tuma-La Dalia, San Sebastiant de Yali, La Concordia, San Rafael del Norte, and Pantasma.

We would like to report on the findings of our observations:

First, in all of the JRVs we visited, we found the election officials represented the political parties in a pluralistic fashion, had received extensive training, and worked competently and responsibly. Citizens entering the registration site had their data entered into the catalog and received their libreta civil in accordance with the law and without irregularities.

Second, the citizens participated enthusiastically and in large numbers which especially impressed us given the isolation, poverty, and illiteracy that characterizes this region. Those without documents (most of those we observed) brought witnesses as specified in the law. The civic education campaign of the Supreme Electoral Council effectively informed the people where and how to register, especially through radio announcements and house-to-house visits by election officials. In addition, people learned about the registration from their neighbors, the Cardinals Verification Commission, and the political parties.
Used, despite concerns we had before the weekend, we found no problems of insecurity or intimidation, nor did we see any political propaganda near the JRVs.

Nevertheless, we did find some problems. In four of the 45 JRVs we visited, the materials ran out, and some, they were not replaced immediately, causing a suspension of the registration. This was due in part to a higher than expected turnout, where in some cases more than 400 people attended a JRV. The problem could be resolved with an extension of the registration period in those areas and the provision of additional materials.

Another problem lay in the demarcation of the JRVs. In some cases, the precinct boundaries did not correspond with the demographic reality, so some citizens couldn’t register in the JRV nearest their homes. As a result, they had to register at another site further away.

We recognize that poor communications and roads impede the ability of the Supreme Electoral Council to respond rapidly to emergency situations. In light of this, we have reported our findings to the Council, and the president has informed us that the necessary measures are being taken to address these issues and thus increase the highest possible voter participation in the upcoming election.

To conclude, we want to recognize the significant efforts of the Supreme Electoral Council to carry out this registration process, the political parties for their collaboration in ensuring this process by organizing and training poll watchers, and the election officials for their dedication to their work. We commend the international community for its support to date and call for its continued strong backing for the Nicaraguan democratic process. Above all, we recognize the Nicaraguan people who registered with a sense of civic responsibility, convinced that with their vote, they could influence their country’s future.
Appendix 3

Translation of
Comments of Luis Alberto Lacalle
Council of Freely Elected Heads of Government
Third Delegation to the Nicaraguan Electoral Process

Sept. 5, 1996

As ex-president of the Republic of Uruguay and, furthermore, in my capacity as a member of the Council of Freely Elected Heads of Government, based at The Carter Center, I am pleased to take advantage of this opportunity to speak with the media and other invited guests regarding the democratic process in Nicaragua. I am accompanied by Dr. Jennifer McCoy, director of The Carter Center's Nicaragua project, and Professor Shelley McConnell, The Carter Center's representative in Nicaragua.

The Nicaraguan Supreme Electoral Council (SEC) and the leaders of the various political parties, including the FSLN and the Alianza Liberal, invited The Carter Center to observe the elections this year. The Center made a preliminary trip in March and established an office in Managua at the end of May. Our first delegation came to observe the ad hoc registration in June.

This visit has given us additional information about the technical preparations for the vote and the political climate of the campaign. During our work in Nicaragua, we met with the SEC magistrates and their technical team which works in Metrocentro. We also met with five political parties and traveled to the departments of Granada and Masaya to observe campaign rallies. Furthermore, we held meetings with other election observers, nongovernmental organizations, civil society, and religious, intellectual, military, and governmental leaders.

The perception of the Nicaraguan elections that results from these meetings is complex and at the same time, in general, positive. Despite persistent concerns about the lack of security in the conflictive regions, the campaign in general has been peaceful. The political debate is intense, which is typical of a democracy as long as it is expressed within the legal framework. Equally positive is the opinion of the citizens with whom we spoke in Granada, Masatepe, and Managua, who were enthusiastic about receiving their voting documents and about voting.

However, we are concerned about some of the technical aspects of the vote. In particular, the cedulization process has been delayed, and many citizens have not received their cédulas nor their documento suplementario. Also, it will be necessary to correct errors in the voters' registration list. The delay in delivering the funds awarded by the state to the parties represented a difficulty for their campaigns. However, the parties did not attribute these delays to political motivation but rather to a lack of resources; nor did they mention the possibility of not participating in the election for these reasons.
The SEC informed us that the intensive delivery campaign starts next week to culminate the delivery of the voting documents. A new tranche of electoral funds was delivered this week. The registration list is ready and will be reviewed and corrected by the parties and the electoral authorities. If these measures are completed on time and according to plan, some of the basic guarantees for a transparent election will be in place.

The road toward democracy is long and difficult. All countries have to continually perfect their electoral systems. In Uruguay, where the political parties have existed for 160 years, we are still reforming the electoral laws. The Nicaraguan democracy is young and still working to perfect its system.

Through missions like this, the Council of Freely Elected Heads of Government and The Carter Center hope to facilitate the road toward democracy for the Nicaraguan people. We announce that former President Jimmy Carter, former secretary of state during the Bush Administration, James Baker; and other Council members will visit Nicaragua to observe the election on Oct. 28.
Appendix 4

Regions Visited by Council Delegates
Oct. 20, 1996

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Department/Region</th>
<th>Observers</th>
<th>Number of JRVs Visited</th>
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<tr>
<td>Carazo</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masaya</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matagalpa</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAAN</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAAS</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>45</strong></td>
<td><strong>207</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Note: Total does not equal 47 because 2 Carter Center staff members manned the office in Managua.)
Appendix 5

NICARAGUAN ELECTION DAY CHECKLIST, OCT. 20, 1996
COUNCIL OF FREELY ELECTED HEADS OF GOVERNMENT

Observer name(s): ___________________________ Time at JRV: ____________

Department and Municipality: ___________________________ JRV No. and location: ___________________________

Number of registered voters: ___________________________ Number of ballots cast so far: ____________

Average time to vote: ____________ Number of people in line (est.): ____________

1. Which Party poll watchers were present? (Check those present):
   - Alianza Liberal
   - FMLN
   - Other

2. Were domestic ET observers present? Yes ___ No ___

3. Which parties nominated the JRV election officials? (List Party):
   - JRV President
   - 1st Member
   - 2nd Member

4. Did party poll watchers and/or domestic observers indicate that there were:
   - (a) no problems
   - (b) a few, but not significant
   - (c) a few significant problems (explain on back)
   - (d) many significant problems (explain on back)

5. What is your overall evaluation of how voting was going at the polling site?
   - (a) JRV functioned normally and without irregularity
   - (b) Some minor irregularities, but not significant in terms of the result
   - (c) Serious problems which could potentially distort the result

COMMENTS / EXPLANATION OF PROBLEMS (CONTINUE ON BACK IF NECESSARY):

6. Check those problems that apply:
   - a) JRV closed or voting suspended (explain on back):
   - b) Insufficient materials (Which kind?):
   - c) Security problems (explain on back):
   - d) Indelible ink not applied correctly (explain on back):
   - e) Intimidation of voters (explain on back):
   - f) Secrecy of ballot not insured (explain on back):

7. How many voters were denied an opportunity to vote thus far?
   - Reasons (give #s):
     - a) Not on list
     - b) Discrepancy between card and list
     - c) No voter document
     - d) Voter at wrong JRV
CLOSED AND COUNTING REPORT
NICARAGUAN ELECTIONS, OCT. 20, 1996
COUNCIL OF FREELY ELECTED HEADS OF GOVERNMENT

Observer name(s):  
Department and Municipality:  
JRV No. and location:  

COUNTING PROCESS:
1. ET observer present?  
2. Intl observer present (organization/s)?  
3. Fiscales present?  
(a) Alianza Liberal  
(b) FSLN  
(c) Other  
4. Time poll closed:  
5. Time count started:  

6. Did party poll watchers register complaints? (if yes, explain on back)  
   (Y)  
   (N)  

7. Did count function normally? (If no, explain on back)  
   (Y)  
   (N)  

8. Did party poll watchers receive copies of results (acta)?  
   (Y)  
   (N)  

9. Number of citizens not permitted to vote:  

   Reason (give #):  
   a) Not on list  
   b) No voter document  
   c) Runt out of materials  
   d) Discrepancy between card & list  
   e) Voter at wrong JRV  
   f) JRV suspended or closed  

ELECTION RESULTS

President  
National Deputies  
Dep. Deputies  

10. Total votes on list:  

11. Total valid votes:  

12. Total null votes:  

13. Total votes cast (A+ B):  

14. Approx. % participation (13/10):  

15. Party/Candidate Vote Totals: (List party abbreviation & total votes for top 5 finishers):  

   party / # votes  
   party / # votes  
   party / # votes  

   party / # votes  
   party / # votes  


49
SUMMARY - ELECTION DAY REPORT  
NICARAGUAN ELECTIONS, OCT. 20, 1996  
COUNCIL OF FREELY ELECTED HEADS OF GOVERNMENT  

Observer name/s:  
Total number of JRVs visited (# of forms):  
Department/s:  
Municipalities:  
Sum total of registered voters at JRVs visited:  
Average of average times to vote:  

1. How many of the JRVs had Party poll watchers present from:  
   - Alianza Liberal  
   - FSLN  
   - MRS  
   - PNC  
   - Pronal  
   - UNO96  
   - Other  

2. How many JRVs had domestic ET observers present?  

3. How many JRVs had officials nominated by the following parties present?  
   - Alianza Liberal  
   - FSLN  
   - MRS  
   - PNC  
   - Pronal  
   - UNO96  
   - Other  

4. In how many JRVs did Party poll watchers and/or domestic observers indicate that there were:  
   a) no problems  
   b) a few, but not significant  
   c) a few significant problems  
   d) many significant problems  

5. How many JRVs did YOU evaluate as:  
   a) JRV functioned NORMALLY and WITHOUT IRREGULARITY  
   b) JRV had some MINOR IRREGULARITIES, but NOT SIGNIFICANT for result  
   c) JRV had SERIOUS PROBLEMS which could potentially distort the result  

6. At how many JRVs were the following PROBLEMS found?  
   a) JRV closed, voting suspended  
   b) Insufficient materials  
   c) Security problems  
   d) Inscribable ink not applied correctly  
   e) Intimidation of voters  
   f) Secrecy of ballot not assured  

7. In how many JRVs were MORE THAN 5 VOTERS denied the right to vote?  

Reasons (give total number of voters for each category):  
   a) Not on list  
   b) Discrepancy between card and list  
   c) No voter document  
   d) Voter at wrong JRV  

---

50
Appendix 6

THE CARTER CENTER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Monday, Oct. 21, 1996

Contact: Donna Conglieo
The Carter Center
Intercontinental Hotel
(505) 222-7842
In Atlanta: (404) 420-5108

Preliminary Statement
Council of Freely Elected Heads of Government
International Delegation To Observe the Nicaraguan Elections
Oct. 21, 1996

Honorable Jimmy Carter

Let me start by saying that we congratulate the Nicaraguan people for their enthusiasm and determination to participate in the democratic process. In spite of some administrative problems, we are most impressed by the excellent turnout and patience of the Nicaraguan people to wait in long lines to cast their ballots. We also witnessed the dedication of election officials, from the polling stations (juntas receptoras de votos or JRVs) up to the national-level Supreme Electoral Council.

Six years ago, we witnessed a tense and polarized election, but a successful one in which all parties accepted the results. The election yesterday confirms how far Nicaraguans have come in moving their conflicts from the battlefield to the political arena. Overall, the campaign was free of violence and all the parties had the opportunity to get their messages to the people without harassment. Nevertheless, there was some unease and uncertainty about the electoral process, which is one of the reasons that we and other international observers are here. We have worked to help reduce these suspicions and to support the efforts of Nicaraguans to ensure the elections would be accepted by all.

On behalf of Presidents Oswaldo Hurtado and Oscar Arias, Secretary of State James Baker, and our 47-member international and bipartisan delegation, I would like to say how honored we are to have been invited by the Supreme Electoral Council (SEC) and the major political parties to observe the Oct. 20th vote in which Nicaraguans elected a president, National Assembly, mayors, municipal councils, and delegates to the Central American Parliament. Presidents Hurtado, Arias, and I are members of the Council of Freely Elected Heads of Government. Three other members of the Council sent representatives: Carlos Bascunan represents former Chilean President Patricio Aylwin; Beatrice Rangel and Daniel Romero, who were with us in 1990, represent former Venezuelan President Carlos Andrés Pérez; and Joaquin Daly is here for former President Belaúnde of Peru. Our group of 27 heads of government from throughout the hemisphere has worked together for 10 years to reinforce democracy and resolve conflicts peacefully. The Council, based at The Carter Center, observed the 1990 elections in Nicaragua and has worked to help Nicaraguans find solutions to problems of inflation and title to property.

We led a delegation of 47 people—election experts, former government officials, doctors, business leaders,

LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN PROGRAM
ONE COPENHILL • 453 FREEDOM PARKWAY • ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30307 • (404) 420-5175 • FAX (404) 420-5196
and foundation executives from nine different countries. Last June, we established an office in Managua, and Professor Shelley McConnell has helped prepare us for this day by monitoring developments and staffing the pre-election missions that have been led by former Uruguayan President Luis Alberto Lacalle, President Hurtado, representatives of President Arias and Belandria, and Dr. Jennifer McCoy, who has coordinated this electoral project.

The Council of Freely Elected Heads of Government sent 20 teams to 15 of Nicaragua’s 17 departments, Oct. 19. Our teams met throughout Saturday with SEC officials, representatives of political parties, security officials, and domestic and international groups to assess the electoral process in each of these departments. On election day, our teams witnessed the opening of the polls, visited approximately 200 JRVs, evaluated election conditions, and then observed the counting of votes in each of these departments.

Our delegation was encouraged by the widespread involvement of the citizens of Nicaragua in these important elections. Although the government faced many challenges in distributing voter identification documents, the vast majority of those who wanted to vote had an opportunity to do so on Sunday. Voter turnout in the areas we observed was over 80 percent, reflecting Nicaraguans’ strong support of the democratic process. Additionally, the political parties expressed their commitment to an open and transparent election, participating in record numbers as juntas or party representatives in the JRVs. Our delegation routinely noted representatives at least seven political parties at each JRV we visited.

The Supreme Electoral Council has gone to great lengths to carry out these very complex elections, responding to the many administrative and logistical challenges even on the day before the elections, to ensure all Nicaraguans would have the opportunity to vote. Many JRVs experienced delays in receiving election materials, particularly ballots, but the SEC reported as of Sunday evening that only 56 of 9,000 polling sites were not able to open due to lack of materials.

We observed that the majority of JRVs opened from one to several hours late because of problems with material delivery. The SEC tried to accommodate the affected voters by instructing the JRVs to remain open a full 11 hours from the time of their installation. We were impressed, too, by the dedication and professionalism of the polling station officials and noted many instances of polling station officials and electoral police sleeping in JRVs on Saturday night to receive the materials and prepare for the opening of the polls.

In more than 95 percent of the voting we observed, party poll watchers and domestic observers told us there were no or only minor problems in the conduct of these elections. We will continue to monitor the results of the election as they are released, and we encourage all political parties to register any complaints with the Supreme Electoral Council to be addressed in a calm and timely fashion.

We congratulate the Nicaraguan people on this important demonstration of their civic spirit and commitment to the democratic process. We recognize the significant progress in these last six years to achieve peace, a large reduction of the armed forces, debt reduction, and macroeconomic stability. Nevertheless, important challenges remain.

We encourage all the participating political organizations in this election to work together in a constructive manner to make their democracy work and address the real concerns of the Nicaraguan people on poverty, unemployment, and economic development. In doing so, they will earn the support of all Nicaraguans who have shown us their strong desire for peace and democracy.
CARTER CENTER STATEMENT ON VOTE REVIEW FOR NICARAGUA ELECTIONS

ATLANTA...The Carter Center’s electoral observation mission to Nicaragua wishes to express its admiration for the peaceful and civic way in which the people and political parties of Nicaragua have participated in all phases of the vote count process since the Oct. 20 national elections. After an exhaustive review and correction of the polling station (JRV) results in each of the 17 departmental headquarters, the Supreme Electoral Council announced provisional election results on Nov. 8. Although the outcome of the presidential election is unlikely to be affected, the official winners of all six elections will be declared only at the end of the appeals and resolutions phase of the process, expected to be completed by Nov. 20.

The Carter Center’s Council of Freely Elected Heads of Government deployed a 47 person election observation team to 14 departments on election day. The Center opened an office in May and sent four pre-election missions in the past year to monitor the entire electoral process. A full report will be issued in December.

Invited as observers by the Supreme Electoral Council and the principal political parties, and at the request of President Chamorro, The Carter Center continues to maintain its office in Nicaragua, under the direction of Professor Shelley McConnell, to observe the post-election process. The project coordinator, Dr. Jennifer McCoy, returned to Nicaragua on Nov. 6 to assess the review process, meet with the political parties, and witness the Nov. 8 announcement.

The vote count and transmission contained a number of irregularities that emerged on the night of the election and in the following days. As a result, the departmental review process was unusually extensive, recounting many ballots, making corrections in the tally sheets, and annulling a number of JRV results.

MORE
because of the disappearance of ballots and other serious problems. Regrettably, the Supreme Electoral Council did not release this information on the corrections made during the departmental reviews, the number and location of annulled polling stations, and the number of votes actually counted to determine the provisional results that were announced on Nov. 8.

It is essential that the Supreme Electoral Council release this information as soon as possible so that Nicaraguans and international observers can evaluate the parties’ appeals as well as the Council’s announcement. Only by such an open and comprehensive review will the people of Nicaragua have confidence in the official outcomes.

The fact that all Nicaraguan parties are pursuing their complaints through legal channels makes a positive statement about the progress made in recent years toward building a civil society in a democratic framework. However, the next few weeks will be critical. We hope that the parties put forward their complaints in a responsible fashion, that the Supreme Electoral Council is responsive to legitimate complaints, and that the parties then accept those results. This is essential for the elections of Oct. 20 to Nicaragua forward in consolidating its democracy. The Nicaraguan people deserve nothing less.

We will issue another statement at the conclusion of this process.
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Friday, Dec. 6, 1996

CARTER CENTER ISSUES FINAL STATEMENT ON NICARAGUA ELECTIONS

ATLANTA, Ga. ... The Carter Center issued a statement today by former U.S. President Jimmy Carter, former Secretary of State James Baker, former Costa Rica President Oscar Arias, former Ecuador President Osvaldo Hurtado, and former Uruguay President Luis Alberto Lacalle on the recent announcement of the Nicaraguan Supreme Electoral Council declaring the official winners of the Oct. 20 elections. The five led a 47-member international election observer delegation and pre-election missions, sponsored by the Council of Freey Elected Heads of Government based at The Carter Center.

The leaders concluded that the elections contained flaws, but the results announced by the Supreme Electoral Council on Nov. 22, by and large, reflected the preferences of the Nicaraguan people. Allegations of fraud are unsubstantiated, and the delegation concluded that Arnoldo Alemán won the presidential election in the first round.

They identified the most positive elements of the election as the high voter turnout, despite some confusion in the polling stations; the large numbers of party poll watchers; the participation of national observers for the first time; and an extensive and peaceful 19-day review and partial recount of the votes. The most serious problems, they said, were due to administrative confusion during the vote count process, which led to the annulling of about 6 percent of the polling stations.

The delegation urged all the political leaders in Nicaragua to accept the results, and they applauded proposals made by the Supreme Electoral Council, President-elect Arnoldo Alemán, and former President Daniel Ortega to improve the electoral law and process for future elections.

The Carter Center will publish a detailed report and recommendations based on its observation of the entire electoral process in Nicaragua.

Editor's Note: A copy of the full four-page statement issued today by the delegation leaders is available upon request. Please call Deanna Comiglio at (404) 420-5108 for a copy.
FINAL STATEMENT
Dec. 6, 1996

Council of Freely Elected Heads of Government
International Delegation To Observe the Nicaraguan Elections

Honorable Jimmy Carter, James Baker III, Oscar Arias, Osvaldo Hurtado, and Luis Albermo Lacalle:

As the leaders of a 41-member international observer delegation sponsored by the Council of Freely Elected Heads of Government and The Carter Center, we wish to congratulate Nicaragua at the conclusion of a difficult, but meaningful election on Oct. 20.

The elections contained flaws, but the results announced by the Supreme Electoral Council on Nov. 22, by and large, reflected the preferences of the Nicaraguan people. Allegations of fraud are unsubstantiated, and the delegation concluded that Arnulfo Aleman won the presidential election in the first round.

The most positive elements of the election were the high voter turnout, despite some confusion in the polling stations; the large numbers of party poll watchers; the participation of national observers for the first time; and an extensive and peaceful 19-day review and partial recount of the votes. The most serious problems were due to administrative confusion during the vote count process.

The time has come for statesmanship in Nicaragua, and we ask all the political leaders to accept the results and work together to improve the country's economy and electoral process.

***

In 1990, we witnessed a tense and polarized election, but a successful one in which all parties accepted the results, and the incumbent party peacefully transferred power to the elected opposition for the first time in the country's history. Six years later, the 1996 elections confirmed how far Nicaraguans have come in moving their conflicts from the battlefield to the political arena. Under the leadership of President Violeta Chamorro, Nicaraguans have eschewed armed conflict and began to develop a political culture based on the rule of law.

Paradoxically, the progress of the last six years contributed to the complexity of the 1996 elections. An active and pluralist National Assembly wrote an electoral law in January 1996 that created an election authority with new and inexperienced officials with little time to be trained. The elections of president, legislature, Central American Parliament, and municipal governments, with six ballots, and the doubling of the number of polling stations made these elections very complicated. The goal of providing every Nicaraguan with a new permanent identity card (cedula) proved too difficult to accomplish by election time and required several types of temporary cards. All of these factors produced difficult administrative challenges for the Supreme Electoral Council.

In assessing an election, we ask whether four essential conditions were met, permitting an adequate expression of the citizens' free choice: These conditions include 1) whether eligible voters can register to vote, 2) parties can campaign freely, 3) voters have a secret ballot, and 4) the vote count is honest. In the case
of the 1996 Nicaraguan elections, we observed first that the vast majority of eligible Nicaraguans had the opportunity to register and vote. Second, the campaign was carried out in a peaceful climate, and the political parties had an opportunity to campaign and get their message out without harassment or intimidation. Third, after overcoming some delays and shortage of materials, all but 11 (of 9,000) voting stations opened on election day, and citizens could vote in a secret ballot.

The fourth condition, an honest and accurate vote count, posed the most difficult problems for these elections. Anomalies cited by the political parties led to a long review process. The many irregularities uncovered during this review and correction period, including the disappearance of ballots and tally sheets, caused the annulment of about 6 percent of the polling stations.

Ten political parties, including the Liberal Alliance and the FSLN, submitted petitions questioning the process to the Supreme Electoral Council. We have reviewed these. The most extensive appeal, presented by the FSLN, requested new elections in the two most populous departments, Managua and Masaya, alleging problems affecting more than half of the voters in each. In our examination of the 647-page FSLN appeal, we found a number of serious concerns. However, the document does not present evidence which could justify allegations of fraud made by senior FSLN leaders.

On Nov. 22, the Supreme Electoral Council rejected the requests for new elections, while granting other petitions for additional annulments of specific polling stations. The SEC confirmed the provisional presidential results announced on Nov. 8; announced for the first time the distribution of seats in the national legislature; and confirmed the mayoral races announced on Nov. 8, with one change in Rivas, a small town on the Atlantic Coast.

The failure by the SEC to explain its decisions when they were announced on Nov. 8 and 22 created some confusion. Finally, on Dec. 3, the SEC explained some of its decisions, including the formula used to assign the legislative seats, and the impact of the appeals process on the final vote results. We hope the SEC will provide more information on the problems and on their decisions so the electoral process can be improved for the future.

Based on the information we have received to date, we conclude the following: First, we have seen no evidence of a systematic pattern of bias in favor or against any particular political party, which would signify fraud. Second, we have seen no evidence that the irregularities would change the outcome of the presidential race. The most significant problem was the loss of some ballots and annulment of others. However, these annulled polling stations did not represent sufficient voters to have reduced the first-place winner below the 45 percent threshold to require a new election. We therefore conclude that Armando Aleman is the president-elect of Nicaragua.

The most serious shortcomings occurred during the vote count process as a result of numerous factors, the fatigue of election officials and party poll watchers after a long election day and night, lack of carbon paper and errors in transcription, problems in the transmission of preliminary results, disorder in several of the departmental receiving stations on election night, a lack of clear and uniform policies for the departmental reviews, partial conflicts over the departmental review procedures, an ambiguous electoral law, and pressures to issue official results quickly. Unfortunately, all of this administrative confusion caused votes in about 6 percent of the polling stations to be annulled for missing tally sheets, ballots, or unauthorized relocation.
We also acknowledge that the observers and party poll watchers share some of the responsibility for failing to monitor carefully the entire process of the transmission of results to the national counting center and the receipt of voting materials in the departmental councils.

We have spoken to both President-elect Arnoldo Alemán and former president Daniel Ortega and are pleased to report that they both stated their desire to reform the Electoral Law and establish a permanent civil service in the electoral branch. We applaud the proposal of the Supreme Electoral Council to conduct a thorough review of the electoral process.

We respectfully suggest the creation of an independent commission that could make recommendations to the Council and the new Assembly, and we encourage the authorities to commit the resources needed to complete the national ID card program and to prepare now for the elections scheduled in 1998.

Elections are the bonds that hold leaders accountable to the people. Because we believe that the legitimacy of the electoral process is essential to a vital and functioning democracy, The Carter Center will issue a detailed report and recommendations based on the observation of the entire electoral process.

We congratulate President-elect Arnoldo Alemán and support his calls for national dialogue and reconciliation. We congratulate all of the newly elected leaders of the government and the opposition and urge them to work together constructively to make their democracy serve the people.

The major opposition party, the FSLN, deserves credit for the civil and peaceful way in which they expressed their concerns with the electoral process and for their call for a national accord. With regret, however, we have to acknowledge our disappointment with their decision to withhold their full acceptance of the results of the presidential election announced by the Supreme Electoral Council. We strongly believe the success of democracy in Nicaragua requires that the electoral process not be treated as an object of bargaining as normally occurs on other issues. We hope all those parties that have not yet accepted the results do so before the inauguration of the new president.

As leaders of the delegation, we wish to express our appreciation to the Nicaraguan people for the opportunity to witness this important demonstration of Nicaraguans' commitment to the democratic process.
## Appendix 9

### Presidential Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party Name and Candidate</th>
<th>Valid Votes</th>
<th>% of Valid Votes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alianza Liberal (AL)</td>
<td>896,207</td>
<td>50.99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Jose Arnoldo Alemán Lacayo)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional (FSLN)</td>
<td>664,909</td>
<td>37.81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Daniel Ortega Saavedra)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camino Cristiano Nicaragüense (CCN)</td>
<td>71,908</td>
<td>4.09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Guillermo Antonio Osorno Medina)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partido Conservador de Nicaragua (PCN)</td>
<td>39,983</td>
<td>2.27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Noel José Vidaurri Arguelles)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proyecto Nacional (PRONAL)</td>
<td>9,265</td>
<td>0.53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Benjamín Ramón Lantos Belva)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movimiento Renovador Sandinista (MRS)</td>
<td>7,665</td>
<td>0.44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Sergio Ramírez Mercado)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alianza Pan y Fuerza (PAN-FUERZA)</td>
<td>7,102</td>
<td>0.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Francisco Mayorga)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acción Nacional Conservadora (ANC)</td>
<td>6,178</td>
<td>0.35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Francisco José Duarte Tapia)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partido Resistencia Nicaragüense (PRN)</td>
<td>5,813</td>
<td>0.31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Edgar Enrique Quirós Tuckler)</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partido Unidad Nicaragüense de Obreros, Campesinos, y Profes. (FUNOCIP)</td>
<td>5,789</td>
<td>0.31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Andrews Abelito Rubias Pérez)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partido Liberal Independiente (PLI)</td>
<td>5,692</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Virgilio Abendanda Godoy Reyes)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Partido Justicia Nacional (PJN)</td>
<td>5,582</td>
<td>0.32%</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Jose Alberto Díaz Cruz)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alianza Unidad (U)</td>
<td>4,873</td>
<td>0.28%</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Alejandro Sertano Caldera)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Partido Communista de Nicaragua (PC DE N)</td>
<td>4,802</td>
<td>0.27%</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Miriam Arguello Morales)</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Partido Alianza Popular Conservadora (APC)</td>
<td>4,632</td>
<td>0.26%</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Miriam Arguello Morales)</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Partido de Unidad Liberal (PUL)</td>
<td>3,887</td>
<td>0.22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Ausberto Navarro Arguelles)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alianza Uno 96 (UNO 96)</td>
<td>3,664</td>
<td>0.21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Alfredo César Aguirre)</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movimiento de Renovación Nacional (MORENA)</td>
<td>2,641</td>
<td>0.15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Allan Antonio Téob Alba)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Partido Acción Democrática (PAD)</td>
<td>1,895</td>
<td>0.11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(James Odineth Weezer Pintas)</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Presidential Results (Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party Name and Candidate</th>
<th>Valid Votes</th>
<th>% of Valid Votes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Partido Integracionista de America Central (FIAC) (Sergio Abado Mendieta Castillo)</td>
<td>1,653</td>
<td>0.09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movimiento Acción Renovadora (EL MAR) (Isla Moisés Hassan Morales)</td>
<td>1,393</td>
<td>0.08%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partido Socialista Nicaragüense (PSN) (Guatayo Ernesto Tablada Zelaya)</td>
<td>1,552</td>
<td>0.08%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alianza Democrática Nicaragüense (PADENIC) (Roberto Uricuyo Muñoz)</td>
<td>890</td>
<td>0.05%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Registered Voters: 2,421,067  
Total Votes: 1,849,362 (76.39%)  
Total Valid Votes: 1,757,773 (95.05%)  
Total Null Votes: 91,587 (4.95%)  
Total JRVs: 8,995  

Note: Turnout was actually higher because during the review process the voters from 510 JRVs (5.6 percent of total JRVs) were annulled for serious irregularities. These JRVs were reported as being counted in the total of 8,995 JRVs, but the undetermined number of votes in these JRVs are not included in the total votes reported by the SEC.

### National Assembly Results by Party

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Number of Deputies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alianza Liberal (AL)</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional (FSLN)</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camino Cristiano Nicaragüense (CCN)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partido Conservador de Nicaragua (PCN)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proyecto Nacional (PRONA)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movimiento Renovador Sandinista (MRS)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partido Resistencia Nicaragüense (PRN)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alianza Unidad (U)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partido Liberal Independiente (PLI)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alianza Uno 96 (UNO)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acción Nacional Conservadora</td>
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Total Number of Deputies: 93
### Mayoral Results by Department

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Departments</th>
<th>AL</th>
<th>FSLN</th>
<th>MRS</th>
<th>ACP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boaco</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carazo</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinandega</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chontales</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estelí</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Granada</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jinotega</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leon</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madriz</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masaya</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matagalpa</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managua</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nueva Segovia</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R.A.A.N.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R.A.A.S.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rivas</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rio San Juan</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals:</strong></td>
<td><strong>91</strong></td>
<td><strong>52</strong></td>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Central American Parliament Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Number of Deputies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alianza Liberal (AL)</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frente Sandinista de Liberacion Nacional (FSLN)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camino Cristiano Nicaragüense (CCN)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partido Conservador de Nicaragua (PCN)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proyecto Nacional (PRONAL)</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Municipalities With More Annulled Votes Than Difference in Votes Among the Top Two Candidates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Municipality</th>
<th>AL Votes</th>
<th>FSLN Votes</th>
<th>Difference</th>
<th>No. of Annulled JRVs</th>
<th>Total JRVs</th>
<th>Estimated Uncounted Votes**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CARAZO</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diriaamba</td>
<td>7,907</td>
<td>7,450</td>
<td>457</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>616</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jinotepe</td>
<td>6,779</td>
<td>7,125</td>
<td>346</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Rosario1</td>
<td>647</td>
<td>596</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MATAGALPA</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matagalpa</td>
<td>13,946</td>
<td>13,003</td>
<td>943</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>5,173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Esquipulas</td>
<td>1,876</td>
<td>1,946</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>386</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muy Muy</td>
<td>1,681</td>
<td>1,530</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>818</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MANAGUA</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tipitapa</td>
<td>14,011</td>
<td>12,122</td>
<td>1,889</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>2,482</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Villa Carlos Fonseca</td>
<td>3,742</td>
<td>2,438</td>
<td>1,304</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>1,342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managua2</td>
<td>110,466</td>
<td>(VM) 100,089</td>
<td>10,377</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>1,869</td>
<td>36,665</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ticuantepe</td>
<td>3,263</td>
<td>2,317</td>
<td>946</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>1,319</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Rafael del Sur</td>
<td>4,611</td>
<td>3,618</td>
<td>993</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>1,422</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. MRS was the vote getter with 647 votes.
2. Viva Managua came in second with 100,089 votes and the FSLN third with 98,089 votes.

The difference between 1st and 2nd place was 10,377 votes and between 1st and 3rd place was 11,657 votes.

** Estimated Uncounted Votes = # of Annulled JRVs multiplied by Average Votes per JRV in Municipality.
Hurtado: Elecciones son nascentiales
Magistral lección de democracia
del expresidente Lacalle

Observador del Contro Carter
cree que las elecciones van bien, pero recuerda que cada ciudadano debe interesarse y participar en el proceso y la construcción de la democracia

Cree que el atraso es normal y el discurso político no contiene amenaza de violencia ni mesianismo
El presidente de la República oriental del Uruguay, doctor Luis Alberto Lacalle, opinó hoy que el proceso electoral de Nicaragua se desarrolla dentro de condiciones que pueden ser calificadas de "normales", y que con energía y a las ciudadanos nicaragüenses a intensificar su participación, tanto hoy como en las elecciones y después de ellas.

"En un mundo que los ciudadanos de Nicaragua, en el marco de una democracia electoral, se dan cuenta que pueden ser elegidos, se dan cuenta que tienen que hacer su propia aportación a las decisiones del país, y que esto es un proceso que ha comenzado y que va a continuar", recordó el doctor Lacalle.

El doctor Lacalle también expresó que la democracia lleva el peligro de la fragmentación del voto, pero que hay que aceptar esa situación. Tal es el caso, dijo, en que la pequeña fracción eleje a un diputado, que puede ser la clave de importantes decisiones, en el Congreso y que una sola persona venga a tener una influencia tal vez decisiva en un asunto de gobierno.

La señora McCoy recordó que, aparte de la cédula, los votantes nicaragüenses disponen de dos documentos más que los garantiza el derecho al voto y sostuvo que el uso de estos indiferentes es esencial para impedir que cualquier votante vaya a votar a varios municipios.

La señora McCoy insistió en que el sistema computarizado de control de la elección garantiza al máximo que los resultados anunciados sean el reflejo de los votos depositados.

Lacalle insistió en que, según el conocido dicho, "la política es demagógica importante para destruir a los políticos", insistiendo en que todo ciudadano debe participar en el juego democrático, como ejercicio esencial para él, su familia y su Patria.

Lacalle también comentó sobre súbitos negativos al ex presidente de los Estados Unidos, John Carter, que de su nombre al centro, y recordó que Carter es un hombre que se deja guiar por sus convicciones y es un cristiano prácticamente que se rige por la norma de hacer el bien a su prójimo en la medida de sus posibilidades.

Dijo a entender que Carter es sólo un miembro del "Centro Carter" y un número de otras personas que lo acompañan en dicho centro, una capacidad muy amplia de acuciación y decisión.

Los ciudadanos, insistió el doctor Lacalle, tienen que ser activos en política. El ex presidente de Nicaragua, aunque muchos armados durante el eclipse de la democracia en su país, apuntó con un globo a la cámaras de televisión y dijo enérgico: "Los derechos que no se ejercen, después no se pueden reclamar". Recorrió que había estado preso "con la cuchilla puesta varias veces", pero que se puede hacer frente a la justicia.

Lacalle también aprecia que la democracia lleva el peligro de la fragmentación del voto, pero que hay que aceptar esa situación. Tal es el caso, dijo, en que la pequeña fracción eleje a un diputado, que puede ser la clave de importantes decisiones, en el Congreso y que una sola persona venga a tener una influencia tal vez decisiva en un asunto de gobierno.
WASHINGTON POST - October 13, 1997

Jimmy Carter
Nicaragua's Next Step
Toward Democracy

Nicaragua and the United States have a crisis common to the 200,000 people who sit in the path to stop a movement to President Violeta Barrios de Chamorro and to end their emerging democratic aspirations. The United States will continue to condition democracy in Nicaragua on the outcome of the elections, but will not support them if the elections are not free and fair. The Carter administration has made this clear in its recent negotiations.

In 1996 Nicaragua took a historic step by authorizing elections and partially transferring power from one party to another for the first time in the country's history. To make a revolution and a political transition at the same time is a huge step to democracy in Nicaragua. We are facing the same situation to democratize as we faced in the United States in 1861.

Washington now is trying to push Nicaragua into the U.S. system of elections and democracy - the Washington model of democracy. The Washington model of democracy is not appropriate to Nicaragua. Nicaragua should not be forced into a U.S. model of democracy.

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Washington now is trying to push Nicaragua into the U.S. system of elections and democracy - the Washington model of democracy. The Washington model of democracy is not appropriate to Nicaragua. Nicaragua should not be forced into a U.S. model of democracy.
Nicaraguan Elections

For a time, Nicaragua seemed to be at the heart of American foreign policy. Prosper and the democratic elections of 1990, won by Violeta Chamorro, restored the country to its familiar place among its neighbors in the Americas. But now this small Central American nation is again in a geopolitical spotlight. By-elections next Sunday will mark the way for a country still struggling to consolidate democracy and to launch a new economic revival. Nicaragua's political leader, assumed not only to be a great political leader, but also to turn the nation into a major symbol of the country's escape from Sandino and Sandinista dictatorship. The vote will be held on Nicaragua's mostly peaceful but still politically divided and property confiscations remain unresolved. The region of the army from Sandinista rule to official civilian hands cannot be said to be handed down. The general lack of anarchy in the north, north, and possible future in the government. The President professing himself now as an obstacle, is one of two major presidential candidates. The other, paving his way to the former president, won the presidential elections. But Chamorro and the other as undoubtedly controversial and often at least some time. They are competing for the third seat occupied by former president Daniel Ortega. Mrs. Chamorro's landslide in 1990 made election implications uncertain. The result is expected to be a victory for the Sandinista party. But whatever the outcome, policy-makers are expected to be a great deal of concern over how the Sandinista party's political agenda. Daniel Ortega's political ambitions have faced American opposition. Senators have harshly criticized their efforts to stabilize the country and lift the country out of poverty. The government is expected to face a difficult future. 

-- The Washington Post
In Nicaragua, Showdown Between Left and Right at Polls

BY LARRY GREEN

MANAGUA, Nicaragua (AP) —

The presidential election in Nicaragua this weekend will be a decisive battle between the left and right, with the outcome hanging in the balance. The two main candidates are Daniel Ortega, the incumbent president, and Felix Maradiaga, a former member of the opposition party. The vote is expected to be closely contested, with both candidates promising to address the country's economic challenges and the ongoing conflict with the United States.

Ortega, who has been in power since 2007, has been accused of corruption and human rights abuses. Maradiaga, on the other hand, has promised to work with the international community to promote peace and stability.

The election is being held amid a tense political climate, with opposition candidates facing pressure from the government. The ruling Sandinista National Liberation Front has been accused of using state resources to support Ortega's campaign.

The winner will face the daunting task of rebuilding the country's economy, which has been hit hard by the pandemic and the decline in oil prices. The government has been criticized for its handling of the pandemic, with cases surging in recent months.

The outcome of the election will have implications for the region and beyond, with Nicaragua's future stability and alliances at stake. The country's relations with the United States and its international partners will depend on the result of the election.

On the day of the election, voting will take place in a variety of locations throughout the country, with security heightened in areas where opposition candidates are expected to perform well. The winner will be announced shortly after the polls close, with the possibility of a runoff election if no candidate receives a majority of the vote.

Daniel Ortega and a former Mayor of Managua may face a runoff election.

The election will be watched closely by the international community, with the potential for a runoff election adding to the uncertainty. The outcome will have implications for the region and beyond, with Nicaragua's future stability and alliances at stake.
THE NEW YORK TIMES - October 22, 1996 (1 of 3)

RIGHTIST IS VICTOR
OVER SANDINISTAS
IN NICARAGUA VOTE

CLOSER U.S. TIES ARE SEEN

Aleman Also Favors a Further
Freeing of the Economy —
Ortega Won’t Concede

BY LARRY ROTHNER

MANAGUA, Nicaragua, Oct. 21 —
Decisively rejecting a bid by the
former guerrilla fighters of the
Sandinista National Liberation Front to
return to power through the ballot
box, Nicaraguan voters have moved
further to the right, electing a
candidate who advocates untram-
modeled free enterprise and a closer
relationship with the United States.

Incomplete initial returns and in-
formal ballot counts compiled by for-
eign election observers gave Arnold Alcain, a former Mayor of Man-
agua who ran under the banner of the
Liberal Alliance, a lead of nearly 18
percentage points over his rival, for-
mer President Daniel Ortega Sanve-
dra, the Sandinista leader. Though
Mr. Ortega has yet to concede official,
Mr. Alcain was quick today to pro-
claim himself the winner.

"With full confidence, I can con-
tirm our victory," Mr. Alcain, a 53-
year-old lawyer and coffee grower,
said this afternoon, as his supporters
gathered at party headquarters to
celebrate their triumph over the revo-

dutionaries who ruled this country
for more than a decade. "We have
condemned democracy in Nicara-
gua.

At a news conference this after-
noon, however, Mr. Ortega chal-

lenged that statement, saying that
"at this moment we cannot recog-
nize the results because we have
found a series of anomalies" in the
vote. With Sandinista supporters
chanting "Fraud, fraud!" Mr. Orte-
ga said the "serious irregularities"
would require a complete recount,
but he provided no evidence to sup-
port his complaint.

With just over half of the nearly
two million ballots cast on Sunday
counted by early tonight, Mr. Al-

cain had 48.5 percent of the vote,

enough to spark him the runoff with
Mr. Ortega he had hoped to avoid.
In a demonstration of the importance
Nicaraguans attach to the vote, more
than 80 percent of all eligible voters

took part in the election, in which 24
different parties offered candidates
for President.

Mr. Alcain's apparent victory com-
pletes a stunning transformation
of the political landscape in this
country. viewed less than a decade
ago as a den of Communist subver-
sion by the Reagan Administration,
which sponsored a long and bloody
guerrilla insurgency aimed at over-
throwing the Sandinistas, Nicaragua
will now be led by a man whose
economic program would not be out
of place in the Republican Party
platform.

The outcome is a resounding de-
feat both for the Sandinistas as a
party and for Mr. Ortega personally.
Putting aside the protests of many
members of his party, Mr. Ortega
had abandoned many planks of his
party's leftist platform in an effort to
win over voters suspicious of the
Sandinistas past.

"Like 1990, this vote was a referen-
dum on the Sandinistas and their
years in power," a Latin American
diplomat here said today. "The re-

sults make it clear the people voted
not so much for Alcain as they did
against Ortega.

Mr. Ortega lost the presidency to
Videla Barrios de Chamorro in the
1990 election. She was prohibited
from seeking re-election by constitu-
tional reforms enacted during her
administration that barred two con-
secutive terms for a President. She
said from the start of her second

term, however, that she did not in-

tend to seek another.
Rightist Is Winner Over Sandinista in Nicaraguan Vote

The Sandinistas came to power in 1979 with broad popular support after overthrowing the Somoza dynasty. But they quickly plunged into confrontation with the United States and eventually alienated the middle class, and the poor who were attracted by property, restrictions on constitutional rights and a policy of universal military conscription.

The results announced in late April Mr. Ortega, virtually the same share of the vote he received as the winning incumbent in 1986, about 35 percent. Those Sandinistas who detested his strategy are said by party leaders to be angry at the working of the party's commitment to socialism and revolution with nothing concrete to show in 1989.

"For Daniel, this defeat may prove to be an even more costly than 1986," a former member of Mr. Ortega's cabinet predicted. "The orthodoxy group within the front is going to be holding him responsible for this loss very soon."

Mr. Alfaro, in contrast, campaigned against both the recent and more distant past, criticizing Miskitu warriors and the Sandinistas for an economic decline that has made the country the second-poorest in the Western Hemisphere, with an
average per capita income of only
$400 a year. We viewed it as worth
investing in the country's development.

It is now clear that this was a serious miscalcu-
tion. The result was not only a failure in the
management of the economy, but also a failure in
the country's political strategy. The failure was
characterized by a lack of transparency and a lack
of accountability. The government was not held
accountable for its actions, and this lack of
accountability led to a lack of trust. The result was
a failure in both the economic and the political
strategy of the country.

The Carter Center:

The Carter Center was established in 1982 by
former U.S. President Jimmy Carter and his wife
Rosalie Carter. The center is dedicated to
promoting human rights, democracy, and peace.

The Carter Center's work is based on the belief
that human rights are fundamental to a stable and
lasting peace. The center works to promote
human rights and democracy in countries around
the world, with a particular focus on the Middle
East. The center's work includes monitoring
elections, mediating conflicts, and providing
technical assistance to governments and civil
society organizations.

In the case of Nicaragua, the Carter Center
played a crucial role in mediating the talks that
led to the signing of the peace treaty. The Carter
Center's involvement in the negotiations was
important because it helped to create a
climate of trust and cooperation between the
government and the opposition. The Carter
Center's role was recognized when the
organization was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize
in 2002.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, the failure of the Nicaragua
peace process highlights the importance of
accountability and transparency in political
decision-making. The lack of trust and the lack
of accountability led to a failure in both the
economic and the political strategy of the
country. The Carter Center's work in
Nicaragua is an example of how important it is to
promote human rights and democracy in order
to achieve lasting peace. The Carter Center's
work is an inspiration to others who are
working towards a better world. 

The New York Times - October 21, 1986 (3 of 3)
Scourge, and Sometime Victim, of the Sandinistas
Jose Arenal Alemán Laravo

The election victory says Nicaraguans will get 'the change they desire.'

BILLY WILLIAMSON / THE NEW YORK TIMES

Jose Arenal Alemán Laravo was born in Nicaragua on Jan. 21, 1940, after what he says were two "dark years," given the Sandinistas' victory at the polls in 1990. The former Sandinista leader, now a member of the Christian Democratic Party, has been in exile since the triumphant rebels came to power in 1979. The Sandinistas are the group that overthrew the Somoza dictatorship in 1979.

Luther in the Year of the War on Drugs

Jose Arenal Alemán Laravo, a member of the Christian Democratic Party, has been in exile since the Sandinistas came to power in 1979. The Sandinistas are the group that overthrew the Somoza dictatorship in 1979.

The election victory says Nicaraguans will get 'the change they desire.'

BILLY WILLIAMSON / THE NEW YORK TIMES

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Nicaragua's Presumptive President, Aleman, Promises to End Sandinista Legacy

By Douglas Farish

MANAGUA, Nicaragua, Oct. 21-Former Sandinista Presi-
dent Daniel Ortega and his faction sought to an-
ticipate Nicaragua's presidential race by an unexpected
move: they nominated a moderate, Violeta Chamorro, to
run as their candidate in the election on November 3.

The announcement was made at a press confer-
ence attended by Ortega, his wife, Rosario Murillo,
and several members of their cabinet.

Ortega said the move was prompted by the desire to
unite the opposition against the government of Presi-
dent Violeta Barrios de Chamorro, who is running for
reelection.

"We are convinced," Ortega said, "that Violeta
Chamorro is the only realistic alternative to the gov-
ernment of Violeta Barrios de Chamorro." He added
that the nomination was made "in the interest of the
country."
Carter, Baker stress Nicaraguan reconciliation

On Oct. 31, the morning after Nicaraguan national elections, several senior U.S. officials sat with a small group of reporters, including Tom Carter of The Washington Times, and discussed the Nicaraguan elections, U.S. policy in Nicaragua in the 1980s, and future U.S. policy toward that nation.


Question: What does it say to you after the campaign transformation of Daniel Ortega, from a leftist revolution leader to a moderate, that he exactly the same percentage of votes this time as he did six years ago?

Jimmy Carter: He has a hard core of support.

Q: Were you surprised at Mr. Aleman's early-morning victory statement before the electoral council has declared him winner?

Jimmy Carter: I was not surprised. I hope he'll be gracious if he is the winner. I don't see any indication of meanness on either side — yet.

Jimmy Carter listens to the translation of a question at a news conference last week in Managua.
ident Bush had not abandoned their commitment to the Contras.

Mr. Baker: Do you accept that word "allegation"?

Mr. O'Neill: I would phrase it differently. I do think we changed our policy. What we did was we decided to see whether we could achieve a compromise with congressional Democrats that would protect the Contras and also the Central Americans and allow for aid to the Contras. I think we certainly changed the policy.

Mr. Carter: When President Bush took over, there was a bipartisan approach. Senator Sasser and Senator Tower met with me, Oliver North and other leaders from Latin America, and that started the possibility of the 1990 elections. It was an enlightened American policy.

Mr. Baker: It was a long negotiation. It was fraught with very sensitive issues. I agree with Senator Chris Dodd [Connecticut Democrat] and Rep. Joe Skeery [Massachusetts Democrat] because this has been the most divisive foreign policy issue in recent years.

Mr. O'Neill: Regarding Alameen, remember, he was the most active supporter of the Contras.

Mr. Carter: I don't think he has any real influence in that regard.
Q: What can Mr. Alemán do to reconcile the heavy yparents of Nicaragua? Mr. Carter: I hope that the people of Nicaragua will be able to agree on a peaceful solution to their problems. If they do, it will bring a period of hope and a return to normal life in that country.

What will be the most significant changes in the situation? Mr. Carter: A peaceful solution to the conflict in Nicaragua would be the most significant change.

What will be the role of the United States in this process? Mr. Carter: The United States will continue to support the efforts of the people of Nicaragua to achieve a peaceful resolution of their problems.

Q: Do you think the current level of aid to Nicaragua is appropriate? Mr. Carter: The level of aid to Nicaragua is appropriate as long as it is used for peaceful purposes and does not contribute to a military buildup.

Mr. Carter: We must continue to support the efforts of the people of Nicaragua to achieve a peaceful resolution of their problems. This is the only way to ensure a lasting peace.

Now I said that once president is talking about paying off peo- ple in 300 percent and the bonds at 15 percent. That would be a decisive blow to the economic obli- gations of Nicaragua.

Q: How does the current situation in Nicaragua affect the United States? Mr. Carter: The situation in Nicaragua poses a significant threat to the United States. We must continue to support the efforts of the people of Nicaragua to achieve a peaceful resolution of their problems.

Mr. Carter: The United States will continue to support the efforts of the people of Nicaragua to achieve a peaceful resolution of their problems.

James A. Baker III: I think that the current level of aid to Nicaragua is appropriate as long as it is used for peaceful purposes and does not contribute to a military buildup.

Mr. Carter: We must continue to support the efforts of the people of Nicaragua to achieve a peaceful resolution of their problems. This is the only way to ensure a lasting peace.

Q: How can Nicaragua change from the way it knew it in 1979, until today? Mr. Carter: Nicaragua has made significant progress in the past few years. The government has taken steps to improve the economy and the standard of living for its citizens. However, there is still much work to be done.

Q: Who was Daniel Ortega? Mr. Carter: Daniel Ortega was a leader of the Sandinista National Liberation Front. He was a key figure in the fight against the Somoza regime in Nicaragua.

Mr. Carter: We must continue to support the efforts of the people of Nicaragua to achieve a peaceful resolution of their problems. This is the only way to ensure a lasting peace.

Q: What was the influence of Nelson Rockefeller on the United States government? Mr. Carter: Nelson Rockefeller was an influential figure in the United States government. He was a member of the Republican Party and served as a governor of New York and as a U.S. senator. He was also a prominent businessman and a philanthropist.

Mr. Carter: We must continue to support the efforts of the people of Nicaragua to achieve a peaceful resolution of their problems. This is the only way to ensure a lasting peace.
Declaración conjunta de observación postelectoral

Observadores atentos a revisión

Recibimos este escrito:
DECLARACION CONJUNTA DE OBSERVACION POST ELECTORAL
Managua, 1o. de Noviembre de 1996

No obstante, los grupos de observación electoral abajo firmantes desean informar al pueblo de Nicaragua sobre nuestra continua observación del proceso electoral de 1996.

Cada grupo ha conservado la presencia de una parte de sus delegados en el país para observar el proceso post-electoral y dar seguimiento a aquellas irregularidades que descubramos en nuestras declaraciones el día de las elecciones.

En el transcurso de estos días, hemos enviado equipos de observadores a los departamentos de Managua, Masaya, Managua, Carazo, Rivas, León, Chinandega, Estelí, Madriz, Nueva Segovia, Granada y Jinotega. A su vez, hemos reunido con los Presidentes de los Consejos electorales de la RAAS y RAAN, así mismo hemos estado en contacto con otros observadores, quienes han visitado los departamentos restantes.

Nuestro trabajo ha estado centrado en la observación de la revisión de las actas de escrutinio, telegramas, recuentos de balotinas y las resultados preliminares que están siendo procesados en los Centros de Cómputos departamentales. Por otra parte, hemos hablado con las autoridades electorales a nivel nacional y departamental, con fiscales y líderes de varios partidos políticos. Además, estamos actualmente siguiendo el proceso de transcripción de los resultados departamentales en el Centro Nacional de Cómputos ubicado en el Centro de Conven.
Observadores ratifican victoria de Arnoldo Alemán

NOELIA GONZALEZ

Pese a las deficiencias presentadas durante las elecciones de octubre, el resultado reflejó en términos generales la voluntad del pueblo nicaragüense y los aliados de fraude carecían de sustento, señaló en su declaración final el Centro Carter.

El ex presidente de Estados Unidos, Jimmy Carter y su secretario de Estado, James Baker y los ex presidentes latinoamericanos Oscar Arias, Oswaldo Hurtado y Luis Alberto Lacalle ratifican en su pronunciamiento final que el nuevo presidente de la República, es el Dr. Arnoldo Alemán.

Realizan un llamado al "liderazgo responsable" y solicitan a los dirigentes políticos aceptar los resultados de las elecciones y trabajar juntos para mejorar la economía de Nicaragua y fortalecer el sistema electoral.

Agregan que el proceso electoral de 1996, que se destacó por una elevada participación ciudadana, por primera vez observadores nacionales, revisaron minuciosamente de votos y recuento parcial pacífico, confirman que los nicaragüenses han avanzado mucho en el camino de trasladar los conflictos a la arena política.

El proceso electoral nacional cumplió estrictamente con el de las cuatro condiciones requeridas que permiten una adecuada expresión de voluntad ciudadana: inscripción, campaña electoral libre y voto secreto.

Sin embargo, la cuarta condición que es el conteo de votos limpios y exacto fue el problema más difícil, ante los alegatos de los partidos sobre presuntas anomalías que condujeron a una larga revisión del proceso, del cual resultó la anulación del seis por ciento de las mesas electorales.

Asimismo, manifiestan su esperanza de que el Consejo Supremo Electoral proporcione más información sobre sus decisiones incluyendo la fórmula usada para asignar escaños legislativos, y sobre los problemas presentados a fin de que el sistema electoral pueda mejorarse.
About The Carter Center

The Carter Center brings people and resources together to resolve conflicts, promote democracy, fight disease, hunger, and poverty; and protect and promote human rights worldwide. It is guided by the principle that people, with the necessary skills, knowledge, and access to resources, can improve their own lives and the lives of others.

Founded in 1982 by Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter in partnership with Emory University, the nonprofit Center undertakes action-oriented programs in cooperation with world leaders and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). In this way, the Center has touched the lives of people in at least 65 countries.

The Center’s programs are directed by resident experts or fellows, some of whom teach at Emory University. They design and implement activities in cooperation with President and Mrs. Carter, networks of world leaders, other NGOs, and partners in the United States and abroad. Private donations from individuals, foundations, corporations, and multilateral development assistance programs support the Center’s work.

The Center is located in a 35-acre park just two miles east of downtown Atlanta. Four circular, interconnected pavilions house offices for the former president and first lady and most of the Center’s program staff. The complex includes the nondenominational Cecil B. Day chapel, other conference facilities, and administrative offices. The Jimmy Carter Library and Museum, which adjoins The Carter Center, is owned and operated by the National Archives and Records Administration of the federal government and is open to the public. The Center and Library are known collectively as The Carter Presidential Center.

More information about The Carter Center, including Center publications, press releases, and speeches, is available on the Internet’s World Wide Web. The Carter Center site is at: http://www.emory.edu/CARTER-CENTER