Latin American and Caribbean Program

The May 9, 1993 Elections in Paraguay

International Observer Delegation of the

The Council of Freely Elected Heads of Government and
The National Democratic Institute for International Affairs

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PRELIMINARY POST-ELECTION STATEMENT

INTERNATIONAL DELEGATION TO THE NATIONAL ELECTIONS IN PARAGUAY

May 10, 1993
Asuncion, Paraguay

We are pleased to offer this preliminary statement on behalf of the international observer delegation sponsored by the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) and the Council of Freely Elected Heads of Government. The delegation, which consists of 31 members from 15 countries, yesterday witnessed Paraguay’s national elections.

The delegation observed the balloting and counting in six major cities -- Asuncion, Colmen Ovidio, Ciudad del Este, Concepcion, Encarnacion and Pedro Juan Caballero -- as well as in smaller surrounding municipalities. This statement represents a consensus view of our observations.

The delegation has been here since Wednesday, May 5. On Thursday and Friday, the delegation met with a broad spectrum of government officials, political leaders, candidates, military officials, civic leaders and members of the Central Electoral Board. On Saturday, most of the delegates deployed to the interior of the country to meet with local candidates and electoral officials. On Sunday, we observed the balloting in 333 mesas (voting tables) at 44 polling sites covering roughly 22 percent of the electorate.

The delegation benefited from the experience of NDI and the Council. NDI, which organized observer delegations to the 1989 national and 1991 municipal elections, has supported civic education programs in Paraguay during the past four years and recently organized workshops to train local officials. The Council and NDI have had experience monitoring the electoral process in 11 countries in the Western Hemisphere.

NDI provided assistance to SAKE, the consortium of nongovernmental organizations, to conduct a quick count for the election. NDI also sponsored a visit by two Panamanian experts in voter registration to help the political parties review the registration files. In March, NDI sent a five-person team to study the electoral process. Last week, NDI published a report based on the team’s findings and the observations and research conducted by NDI Program Officer Steve Griner, who has been in Paraguay for six weeks.
The delegation notes that the final tabulation of results has not been completed. Therefore, this statement reflects a preliminary assessment by the delegation. A more detailed final report will be issued next month. Representatives of NDI and the Council will remain in Paraguay to await the announcement of the results and to investigate electoral challenges and complaints.

Since the coup in 1989, Paraguay has made impressive democratic progress. During this year's campaign, political parties and civic groups were largely allowed to organize unencumbered. Candidates freely debated the most contentious issues. Journalists freely investigated the candidates' backgrounds and analyzed their platforms. One independent newspaper editor, who had suffered repression in the past, told our delegation that the press has become free in the past four years.

Throughout the country, the elections were generally conducted in a peaceful and orderly manner. Particularly in urban areas, the elections were administered properly, in contrast to the 1991 municipal elections when thousands of voters were unable to locate their voting sites on election day. Despite the sometimes sluggish administration of the ballotting, voters waited patiently to cast their ballots. There was no evidence on Sunday that the registration lists had been altered to hinder the ability of opposition supporters to find their voting sites, as opposition parties had feared.

Most disputes were resolved peacefully by the election officials and party pollwatchers at the mesas. The apoderados (polling site supervisors) offered assistance to voters and mesa officials, and pollwatchers from different political parties worked cooperatively.

As in all transitional elections, many of the parties raised deep concerns that certain election problems could result in fraud on election day. We decided to test the magnitude of these problems while seeking to determine any patterns to these irregularities in a questionnaire that our observers filled out at each of the mesas and sites visited.

Our observers covered 333 mesas and in addition surveyed 44 voting sites through discussions with apoderados that covered 1866 mesas or roughly 21 percent of all the mesas in the country. This did not represent a systematic sample, but rather an attempt to cover large areas of the country. The results of the survey indicate that these problems rarely occurred and were isolated.

… While there was initially some concern that the election officials would not be representative, our survey found that there were three election officials, generally representing three different parties in 99.1% of the mesas and 99.7% of the sites with complete survey response.

… Pollwatchers play an invaluable role on election day, and as a rule, we have found that elections are more likely to be free if all the major parties have pollwatchers. Our survey found that pollwatchers representing at least two parties were present at 76.3% of the mesas and
99% of the responding sites. This, however, understates the coverage because of the representativeness of the polling officials and the presence of apoderados.

... Some people were concerned that election materials would not be available in sufficient supply, but our survey found that they were at 96.8% of the mesas and 99.4% of the responding sites.

... Despite concerns that the full list of polling procedures would not be followed, they were generally followed without significant problems at 94% of the mesas and 95% of the responding sites.

... Significantly, given the concerns raised about the quality of the voters list, the survey found that voters were generally able to find the correct location and to vote without problems at 97.5% of the mesas and 98.6% of the responding sites.

... Most importantly, the overall voting process was satisfactory at 92.3% of the mesas and 94.5% of the responding sites.

Irregularities were more common in the interior. Our delegates witnessed intimiation of voters by Colorado Party members and observed mesas where, in violation of the electoral code, all the electoral officials were members of the ruling party. There was also evidence that false identification cards had been issued. While these irregularities were isolated, the delegation takes these problems seriously and urges authorities to investigate promptly all election-related complaints.

We also condemn the actions deliberately taken to restrict the ability of Paraguayans to monitor their own electoral process. SAKA, which conducted independent vote tabulation to accurately project the election results, was unable to tabulate these results with sufficient speed because the telephone company blocked many of its lines. Explanations provided by the authorities, who attributed the problems to unavoidable technical difficulties, are not credible. Paraguayan authorities have the technical know-how to have restored seven of SAKA’s phone lines, but, we believe, a decision was made to obstruct the organization’s work.

Despite these efforts, the consortium completed the quick count that confirmed the tendency of the official results. We commend the thousands of SAKA volunteers for having accomplished this under difficult circumstances and with great enthusiasm, dedication and integrity. Their work attests to the emergence of a strong and active civil society in Paraguay.

We are also concerned about certain events that occurred during the campaign, as well as in the past several days. They detracted from the overall positive campaign environment. Although the holding of primaries to select candidates was a positive step toward the democratization of Paraguay’s political parties, the disputed Colorado Party primaries created
uncertainty among the electorate about the prospects for a fair general election. The allegations of fraud in the primaries were never satisfactorily resolved.

The generally festive atmosphere on election day was marred by news of two incidents: the attack on Channel 13 early Sunday morning and the closing of Paraguay’s border at certain points. We urge the authorities to investigate the attack on the television station, and we trust that this attempt to intimidate the vigorous Paraguayan press will fail.

The judicial decision to close the border in many areas apparently denied some Paraguayans living outside the country the right to vote. Although it is not clear how many registered voters were among those who were not permitted to return to Paraguay, all the presidential candidates denounced the disenfranchisement of prospective voters and violation of Paraguayans’ rights to enter the country. Ironically, while Paraguay welcomed hundreds of international observers, many Paraguayans who had hoped to participate in the elections were unable to do so.

Throughout the electoral process, optimism about the improved political environment and electoral administration was constantly tempered by uncertainty about the commitment to the democratic process of certain elements within the military. General Lino Oviedo’s involvement in the electoral process was a blatant violation of the constitutional prohibition against the military from participating in partisan politics. His threat days before the election that the military and the Colorado Party would rule for centuries raised legitimate fears that a victory by the opposition would not be accepted.

Despite the above mentioned irregularities, the delegation has not received evidence that these were systematic or extensive enough to significantly alter the final results.

Looking to the future elections, the delegation believes that steps should be taken to increase confidence in the electoral process. Political party representatives should be assured greater access to any information handled by the National Electoral Board. The nine-member board should meet more frequently to allow opposition parties to participate in the decision-making process. The electoral board should provide the political parties with the voter registration lists on disks to facilitate verification of the lists. The delegation also recommends that the government and electoral board carry out greater civic education programs.

Reaching consensus on such reforms should be easier since yesterday’s election has altered the political landscape in Paraguay, which was dominated for so many years by a single party. The composition of the next Congress and regional government bodies will reflect the more pluralistic nature of Paraguayan society.

The winner of the elections faces great opportunities and challenges. The next government can either be constrained by autocratic elements that may try to retard Paraguay’s transition toward democracy or it can respond affirmatively to the Paraguayan people’s desire to accelerate that transition. Yesterday’s results have shown that most Paraguayans want the
Because the next government is not likely to have a majority in Congress, cooperation among the political parties will be essential. That cooperation should begin as soon as possible. We encourage the president-elect to begin a dialogue with the other major parties, whose assistance will be needed to effectively govern.

We urge the ruling party to sever its ties with the military and to work toward the establishment of a professional nonpartisan force. Civilian control of the military must be enhanced by training members of Congress on military affairs and by strengthening the independence and capacity of the Ministry of Defense.

The delegation emphasizes that the holding of competitive elections, while essential, is but one aspect of a democratic society. It is apparent that many challenges remain in this regard in Paraguay. Among the tasks that remain are the creation of a strong legislative branch to oversee the executive and a greater role for local and regional governments. It will be the Paraguayan people and their elected representatives at all levels who must strive to meet these challenges. The international community renews committed to supporting their efforts.
PARK GUAY NATIONAL ELECTIONS
INTERNATIONAL OBSERVERS
MAY 9, 1993

Jimmy Carter (Leader)
Chairman
Council of Freely Elected Heads of Government
UNITED STATES

Rodrigo Carazo (Co-leader)
Member
Council of Freely Elected Heads of Government
COSTA RICA

B.A. Graham (Co-leader)
Senator
CANADA

Lourdes Alvarado
Professor
University of Panama
PANAMA

Elizabeth Bagley
Board Member
National Democratic Institute
UNITED STATES

Enrique Bernales
Director
Constitution and Society
PERU

David Carroll
Assistant Director of Latin American/Caribbean Program
The Carter Center of Emory University
UNITED STATES

Curtis Cutter
President
Interworld Consultants, Inc.
UNITED STATES

Francisco Díez
Representative of Council Member
Raul Alfonsin, Former President of Argentina
ARGENTINA

Rita DiMartino
Director of Federal Government Affairs
AT&T
UNITED STATES

Mark Feierstein
Senior Program Officer
National Democratic Institute
UNITED STATES

Cedric Grant
Former Guyanese Ambassador to the United States
GYANA

Pedro Antonia Gomez de la Fuente
Director
National Electoral Council
ARGENTINA

Steve Griner
Program Officer
National Democratic Institute
UNITED STATES

Pierre Letamendia
Deputy Mayor of Souriaude
FRANCE
Kenneth Melley  
Board Member  
National Democratic Institute  
UNITED STATES

Bonginkosilj Mthethwa  
Member of Election Commission of Pan Africanist Congress of Abama  
SOUTH AFRICA

Edgardo Mínica  
National Director  
Project Chile  
CHILE

Beatty Nagel  
Director of Latin American Studies  
Carleton College  
UNITED STATES

Robert Pastor  
Executive Secretary of the Council of 
Freesly - Elected Heads of Government  
The Carter Center of Emory University  
UNITED STATES

Marta Pérez  
Member of Convergencia  
MEXICO

Jacqueline Pitanguy  
President  
Science, Study, Investigation, Research, and Action  
BRAZIL

Emmanuel Chinkwiga Phiri  
Acting Chairman  
Public Affairs Committee  
MALAWI

James Rosenau  
Professor of Political Science  
George Washington University  
UNITED STATES

Stephen Schlesinger  
Director for International Organizations  
New York State Department of Economic Development  
UNITED STATES

MiMkhil Schneider  
Advisor  
Mayor of Moscow  
RUSSIA

Timothy Towell  
Former U.S. Ambassador to Paraguay  
UNITED STATES

Leo Valladares  
Human Rights Ombudsman  
HONDURAS

Patricia Weir  
Professional Staff Member  
House Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere Affairs  
UNITED STATES

Ken Wollock  
President  
National Democratic Institute  
UNITED STATES

STAFF

Rob Black  
Logistics Assistant

Mary Hill  
Logistics Manager

Katie Kelsoch  
Program Assistant
April 27, 1993

Mr. Jimmy Carter
Former President of the United States of America
c/o United States Embassy
Asunción, Paraguay

Dear Mr. President:

We have the honor of inviting you again to attend the May 9th general elections in Paraguay as an international observer.

These elections represent the most important step towards consolidating democracy in Paraguay. Their fairness and transparency shall legitimate our country’s first civilian government in more than fifty years. Numerous high level international observers have already agreed to be present. However, because of your achievements as a champion of world democracy and a symbol in the defense of human rights, you will be the most significant witness of these elections and will strengthen the ties of friendship and common ideals between the people of Paraguay and the United States.

Sincerely yours,

Guillermo Caballero Vargas
Presidential Candidate
Alianza Encuentro Nacional

Domingo Laine
Presidential Candidate
Partido Liberal Radical Auténtico

Juan Carlos Wasmosy
Presidential Candidate
Asociación Nacional Republicana - Partido Colorado
June 4, 1993

To His Excellency Juan Carlos Wasmosy

Please accept my warmest congratulations on your election as the next President of the Republic of Paraguay. Your choice as the first freely-elected civilian President in the country’s history has special historic significance.

Having had a chance to meet you, I am sure that you will use your position to consolidate Paraguayan democracy and modernization, promote trade and investment with the United States and eliminate corruption, drug trafficking and other threats to representative institutions.

Though your task will not be easy, you have the advantage of working with newly-elected Senators and Deputies from all major parties who, like you, have an important stake in the success of Paraguay’s democracy and economic reform.

I wish you success in your important undertakings. It was an honor witnessing your election and that of the legislators, governors, and members of department councils who will be working with you in the years ahead. Warm regards,

Sincerely,

Juan Carlos Wasmosy
President-elect of the Republic of Paraguay
Asuncion

THE CARTER CENTER, INC. • ONE COPENHILL • ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30307
W 404-420-5551 • FAX 404-420-5196
Delegation's Presence Assures Fair National Elections in Paraguay

On May 1, 1993, voters in Paraguay elected Juan Carlos Wasmosy as the country's first civilian president in four decades. To ensure fairness, former President Jimmy Carter, chairman of the Council of Freely Elected Heads of Government, led a 31-person international delegation to observe the elections. The observer team was jointly sponsored by the Carter Center and the Carter Center Center of Emory University (CCCEU), and the Washington, D.C.-based National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI).

The elections offered Paraguay its first opportunity in history to conduct peacefully two consecutive democratic elections for president. Approximately 75 percent of voters turned out to elect Mr. Wasmosy, a member of the ruling Colorado Party, with 40 percent of the vote. He will be inaugurated on Aug. 15, succeeding Gen. Andres Rodriguez, President Rodriguez was elected in 1988, after the fall of dictator Gen. Alfredo Stroessner.

Other top candidates for president were Guillermo Cabrera Varela of the centrist coalition National Encounter and Domingo Lainez of the Authentic Radical Liberal Party. Thirty-three percent of voters cast ballots for Mr. Lainez; Mr. Varela received 21 percent of the vote.

Although Paraguay held a democratic national election in 1988, many people there were concerned about the integrity of the May elections. During the campaign, Gen. Lino Oviedo stated that the military's alliance with the long-ruling Colorado Party would remain unbreakable. Gen. Oviedo's statements and other concerns prompted the three presidential candidates to write to former President Jimmy Carter and urge him to observe the elections.

"This kind of activity would not be as serious in most countries, but in one like Paraguay, just merging temporarily from military dictatorship, it was truly intimidating and threatening," President Carter said.

The observer delegation was present in Paraguay from May 5-11. Observers were deployed throughout the country on election day and remained in Asuncion after the elections to analyze the election process.

Overall, elections in Paraguay went smoothly, although voting in some areas was marred by fraud and sabotage. Telephonic lines used by SAKSA, a non-governmental organization conducting a parallel vote count, were cut. In addition, volunteers tried to observe the vote counts and deliver the results were excluded from some voting tables.

Despite the irregularities, the observers were satisfied that they were not significant enough to affect the election outcome. The overall voting process was satisfactory at 93.5 percent of the voting tables that we surveyed.

President Carter said, Rodolfo Carson, former president of Costa Rica and a member of the Council of Freely Elected Heads of Government, and Sen. Al Grahm of Colorado, who has led two previous NDI observer missions to Paraguay, joined President Carter in leading the international delegation.

"There is no doubt our presence helped to stabilize the situation in moments of crisis and make it possible for all candidates to accept the results calmly and graciously."

Although international observers did not personally witness any significant negative incidences, there is no doubt our presence helped to stabilize the situation in moments of crisis and made it possible for the major candidates to accept the results calmly and graciously," said President Carter.

"Also, we believe our strong condemnation of military interference will have a beneficial effect.

Last fall, the Council's two-year project in Ceylana culminated with that country's first verifiably free election in 28 years. "Because Paraguay's presidential election was similarly successful in being respected by all parties, every country in South America has now held free, competitive elections," said Robert Faurer, executive secretary of the Council and director of CCCEU's Latin American and Caribbean Programs. "The next step for the hemisphere is to forge not bands to preserve, consolidate, and deepen the new democracies."

continued on page 7
Los votos para presidente y vicepresidente

A tres días de las elecciones generales, y sin contar con los voto oficial de la Junta Electoral Central, publicamos en este espacio los cálculos proporcionalistas por los diferentes partidos políticos así como también por el conocido independiente Saka.

El cómputo parcial de Saka otorga a la ANR 311,284 votos, el PLRA 322,330 votos, EN 277,584 votos, y el EN 871,944 votos, lo que hace un 32,11%.

Otra salta un total de 20,493 votos, un 2,559% según la ANR, ellos son 266,324 votos, lo que hace un 3,379% el PLRA obtiene, 283,999 votos, un 3,539% y el EN 204,629 votos, un 2,479%. Otros representan el total de 23,382 votos, un 2,666% en total de votos, el PLRA salta a la ANR un total de votos 202,313, lo que representa el 37.61% el PLRA tiene 193,584 votos, un 36.01% y el EN 129,452 votos, un 23.86%.

En octavo se encuentran 15,594 votos, en 2,52%

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Governing Party's Candidate Wins Paraguay's Presidential Election

By JAMES BROOKE

SAN JUNINO, Paraguay, May 10 — After voting marked by fraud and sabo-
tage, Paraguayan politicians closed ranks today and recognized Juan Cir-
nus, his rival, as the winner of the first multiparty elections in this South
American nation's colonial history.

Election analysts said fraud had not been widespread enough
to have changed the outcome, which

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seats and a majority of the 17 state
governorships, the results indicate that
its momentum has stopped. In February 1989, when
Mr. Alfredo Stroessner was

The important fact is that the oppo-
sition candidate won almost 40 per-
cent of the vote," said Mr. Carter,
whose delegation is from the National
Democracy Institute for International
Affairs, a Washington-based group fi-
nanced by public and private groups.

Mr. Wasmuett's failure to be-
come the first Cuvian President in the
memory of most of Paraguay's 4.4
million people, several observers, in-
cluding Mr. Carter, worry that the pow-
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Peruvian President Alan Garcia
has been a significant factor in
"His opponent checked 1,835 vote tables
at polling stations throughout the coun-
try. The overall voting process was
cautious at 52.5 percent of the vot-
ing tables surveyed, Mr. Carter said.
Mr. Wasmuett, a conservative con-

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the midst of a power struggle for the
head of the conservative Colorado Par-
y fabricated the result.

A clear result in a
country marred by
corruption.

"It would have been civil war," said Mr. Lum, who won with 31 percent of the vote.

In an interview today, Mr. Wasmuett said: "I am going to be President and I will be in charge of the armed forces," he said.

One of Paraguay's wealthiest busi-

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Ruling Party Wins in Paraguay

Presidental Election Called "Free and Fair"

By Dan Pedreira

ASUNCION, Paraguay, May 10—The candidate of Paraguay’s longtime ruling Colorado Party, Juan Carlos Wasmosy, emerged today as the clear winner in the country’s first multiparty, direct elections for a civilian president.

“There is no doubt that this election marks a turning point,” former president Jimmy Carter, head of a team of observers sent by the National Democratic Institute, said today.

He characterized the elections as “free and fair and democratic and successful,” but he criticized a senior army commander for having remained before the election that the military would not put up with a change of ruling party.

Carter also condemned that the phone lines at the independent telephone-monitoring group Saka had been cut six Sunnter afternoon and had not been restored even after the倚通与Paraguay’s outgoing president, Gen. Andres Rodriguez, Rodriguez called the colonel who runs the telephone company. Carter said in a press conference, but the company did not restore service.

Today, Saka reported that Wasmosy had won 38.9 percent of the vote, compared with 31.5 percent and Guillermo Cabaldon Vargas of the National Opposition party and 27.1 percent.

TUESDAY, MAY 11, 1993

There were several reports of Colorado partisans harassing voters Sunday, and a judge ordered the voting closed to Paraguayans returning home to vote, which Carter also noted as irregularities and violations of Paraguay’s laws. But Wasmosy’s margin of victory was so large that the challenges could not have changed the outcome.

The Colorado, who had been widely expected after a bruising primary in March, at first appeared to have lost, trailed Cabilcular Vargas in pre-election polls. But in the closing days of the campaign, they were able to regroup their electorate, Esteban Cabaldon of Saka said.

Wasmosy, 34, is a civil engineer and businessman who made a fortune during the construction of Paraguay’s massive Itaipu Dam on the border with Brazil. During the campaign he emphasized modernizing the economy and creating more jobs.

Wasmosy’s only previous government experience was as minister of integration as Rodriguez’s government.

In a press conference tonight, Wasmosy responded to questions about panama human rights violations during the 38-year dictatorship of Gen. Alfredo Stroessner, by saying it was time to “turn the page” and look forward. He said he would leave prosecution of individual human rights cases to the judiciary.

In a speech to cheering supporters late Sunday night in which he invoked the name of the Colorado Party repeatedly, Wasmosy promised to be “faithful to the constitution.”

In a televised speech today, Gen. Lino Oviedo, a senior army commander, vowed to “obey the will of the elected president.” The Coloradoados have long been allied with the military and were the party of dictator Alfredo Stroessner, who after nearly 33 years in power was ousted by Rodriguez four years ago.

Before the election, many Pacifacistas had feared that the military might intervene if the Colorado appeared destined for defeat especially after Oviedo said the armed forces were not prepared for any other winner and expected to continue “co-governing.”
Paraguayan Election Draws Heavy Turnout.

By JAMES BROOKS

NEW YORK TIMES

ASUNCION, Paraguay, May 9 —

Given the chance to vote for a civilian major in their first free general election, Paraguayans voted today with a heavy and enthusiastic turnout.

May 95 percent of the voters cast ballots in this country of 4.1 million, the last South American nation to adopt a system ensuring democratic election of a civilian president.

Three surveys of voters leaving polling places indicated a close, three-way race between Juan Carlos Wasmosy, the candidate of the governing Colorado Party; Donaldo Lacalle, candidate of the Liberal Party; and Grigorio Vargas, candidate of a new electoral movement, the National Front.

The military-backed Colorado have ruled Paraguay since 1947, the longest uninterrupted tenure of any party in South America.

People want a change — I’m voting for Caballero Vargas,” said Ramon Yucar, a retired civil servant, as he waited in line to vote in a working class neighborhood here.

Each of the three major candidates claimed victory tonight. Six summary votes on the ballot, and preliminary results are not expected until Monday afternoon.

“All three candidates have expressed strong support for honoring the results of the election,” Foreign Minister Jimmy Carter said after having lunch with the three major candidates here. “This obviously includes the reception of any military interference in the electoral process.”

Carter is one of about 100 foreign election monitors who are visiting Paraguay to observe the voting.

Before the polls opened, Paraguay’s President, Gen. Andrade Rodriguez, said: “I pray the new time and history, that the party political party has a chance to win.”

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At the borders of this landlocked nation, armed soldiers withdrew Paraguayan from returning from Brazil and Argentina in awe. By tradition, officers in Paraguay’s Army are members of the governing Colorado Party and remain in the usually supportive of opposition parties.

“We want to vote. We want to vote,” dozens of Paraguayans chanted in front of the traffic who blocked international bridges.

Political analysts said they were worried that the Colorado political machine would show the victory in their candidate’s sale.

The electoral system is still in the hands of the military, a public official said.

Under the new Constitution, Paraguay presidents are barred from serving more than one term. The clause was included in order another dictatorship resembling that of Gen. Alfredo Stroessner, who served power in 1954 until 1973. The country has just through a series of fraudulent elections until he was overturned by General Rodriguez in 1989. Mr. Stroessner now 80, lives in exile in Brazil.

THE NEW YORK TIMES INTERNATIONAL MONDAY, MAY 10, 1993

Paraguayan Election Draws Heavy Turnout.

By JAMES BROOKS

NEW YORK TIMES

ASUNCION, Paraguay, May 9 —

Given the chance to vote for a civilian major in their first free general election, Paraguayans voted today with a heavy and enthusiastic turnout.

May 95 percent of the voters cast ballots in this country of 4.1 million, the last South American nation to adopt a system ensuring democratic election of a civilian president.

Three surveys of voters leaving polling places indicated a close, three-way race between Juan Carlos Wasmosy, the candidate of the governing Colorado Party; Donaldo Lacalle, candidate of the Liberal Party; and Grigorio Vargas, candidate of a new electoral movement, the National Front.

The military-backed Colorado have ruled Paraguay since 1947, the longest uninterrupted tenure of any party in South America.

People want a change — I’m voting for Caballero Vargas,” said Ramon Yucar, a retired civil servant, as he waited in line to vote in a working class neighborhood here.

Each of the three major candidates claimed victory tonight. Six summary votes on the ballot, and preliminary results are not expected until Monday afternoon.

“All three candidates have expressed strong support for honoring the results of the election,” Foreign Minister Jimmy Carter said after having lunch with the three major candidates here. “This obviously includes the reception of any military interference in the electoral process.”

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Today's election was watched by more than 200 international monitors from the Organization of American States and the National Democratic Institute, among other groups, along with former president Jimmy Carter, who was invited by all three leading candidates.

Caceres had lunch today with Waxmos, Lino and Caballero Vargas and announces afterwards that the three had agreed to respect the outcome of the election and allow the winner to take office in August. Carter, who has observed elections in Nicaragua, Panama and elsewhere, praised the Paraguayan vote clean about two hours before the polls closed, saying: "So far, these are the best elections that I have ever seen."

During the campaign, there was little debate about traditional political issues, such as social problems or the economy. The central issue was whether it is time for the Colorado Party to hold control of the government after running this nation of 4.4 million people for 48 years. The country's 320,000 government workers and 16,000-man armed forces bravely support Colorado, which mixed doubts that they would be willing to allow an opposition party to be declared the winner or to govern.
Dirty Democracy in Paraguay

Fortunately, electoral chicanery did not decide the outcome of Paraguay's first-ever democratic presidential election last week. Unfortunately, enough chicanery took place to mar what should have been a proud achievement.

Days before the election, a key army commander swore that the military would maintain the long-ruling Colorado Party in power whatever the voters decided. Earlier, the Colorado's president had promised to win the election by "assault" and "special tricks."

On Election Day, rifle fire damaged the only opposition television channel, while Government officials temporarily cut the phone lines of opposition parties and a nonpartisan group plans to compile an independent vote count.

Quick intervention by ex-President Jimmy Carter, on the scene as an international election observer, helped get the votes-counters' phones restored. And since the Colorado candidate came in first, the military's threat was never put to the test.

Paraguay has had an extraordinary history from the days when Jesuit missionaries organized settlements to protect the indigenous Guarani people against European slave traders to the 35-year dictatorship of Gen. Alfredo Stroessner, overthrown only four years ago. Dictators brought wars and wars brought dictators until the cycle was finally broken by a 1989 coup.

The leader of that revolt, Gen. Andres Rodriguez, now ending his term as President, deserves considerable credit for rolling back repression and preparing for a democratic succession. But army commanders and Colorado Party leaders have kept trying to undermine his good works.

President-elect Juan Carlos Wasmosy would do well to press ahead with his predecessor's reform agenda. Paraguayans are entitled to share fully in what has become the most democratic era in South American history.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR
SUNDAY MAY 23, 1993

Election in Paraguay

To the Editor:

The headline "Dirty Democracy in Paraguay" (editorial, May 14) may have given a misleading impression about the presidential election. As an election observer in a mission sponsored by the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs and the Carter Center, I attended with my fellow participants that the election, representing the first democratic transfer of power in Paraguay's history, was by and large fair, if not perfect.

There were blemishes, including one that you did not note — the temporary closing of the border with Brazil on Election Day — but they were not enough to make a difference.

The 6,000 spirited young Paraguayans mobilized to report results on Election Day, the victory of a moderate Colorado Party candidate and the success of opposition parties in Congress appear to represent a new civic culture beginning in a once-bloated land.

STEPHEN SCHLESINGER
New York, May 17, 1993
Preocupa a Carter injerencia de militares en proceso político

El ex presidente de los EE.UU, Jimmy Carter, dijo ayer que la delegación de observadores de la NDI (National Democratic Institute) que encabeza, ha visto una "torbellina realmente histórica" en la evolución del Paraguay hacia la democracia y la libertad, en que por primera vez un gobierno elegido en libres comicios va a suceder a otro. Por otra parte, expresó su preocupación por la injerencia de jefes militares en el proceso, refiriéndose directamente al General Lino Oviedo. Sostuvo que de no ser erradicada esa intervención de F.E.A.A., difícilmente podrá consolidarse la democracia en el país. Así mismo, confirmó la acción, a su parecer, premeditada en cuanto al corte de las líneas telefónicas de la organización Saka, que, pese a las promesas que le hizo el presidente Rodríguez, no fueron restituidas.

En la conferencia de prensa convocada ayer en el hotel El Rancho, Carter dio un informe del consejo de observadores de la NDI, que presenció las elecciones nacionales del domingo pasado.

En ese sentido, dijo que han observado "un proceso de votación en la ciudad, Ciudad del Este, Concepción, San Ignacio de Merín, Pedro Juan Caballero y algunas comunidades del área rural. Añadió que han hecho un resumen de lo observado en las elecciones anteriores del '89 y '91 y que se realizaron ahora. Añadió que el Paraguay, a diferencia, ha tenido un gran progreso hacia la democracia, la libertad, y en materia de derechos humanos desde el '89.

En cuanto a los pueblos negativos observados, el ex presidente de los EE.UU, dijo que los apoderados del Partido Colorado no quisieron hablar con ellos en Ciudad del Este, tierra de las instituciones del Gobierno, que recibieron para estar como observadores de los comicios.

Seguidamente, señaló que particularmente condena la interferencia hecha por el Gobierno y la ANTELCO en la organización Saka, que le impidió tener el resultado de la computación paralelo de la elección en forma responsable.

"Todo el mundo sabe que todas las instituciones computarizadas están ligadas a través de líneas dedicadas a todo el país. Luego las líneas estaban muy cuidadosamente vigiladas, pero al mediodía de ayer que el domingo, estas líneas se cortaron. Personalmente fui a visitar al presidente Rodríguez por eso. El hizo un llamado a la ANTELCO y ellos nos aseguraron que las líneas estarían operando habilitadas", subrayó.

Agregar que, sin embargo, le llegó a la mañana y no se derivaron las líneas telefónicas a Saka, ni siquiera las líneas alternativas que podrían ser réplicas en quince minutos, si es que tenían intenciones de hacerlo.
"Hasta esta fecha ha tenido algunos contratiempos, pero creo que la idea de crear una fundación demócrata en Paraguay es una idea que merece ser considerada. En mi opinión, esto puede llevar a un cambio importante en la política de Paraguay."

"José Luis A. Urtubey"

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El ex presidente de EE.UU Jimmy Carter, junto a los nuevos dirigentes del Concejo de la Nación, durante la conferencia de prensa brindada en el Congreso de la Nación, durante la conferencia de prensa brindada por el nuevo líder de la oposición en el Paraguay, "José Luis A. Urtubey". En la conferencia, Carter expresó su apoyo al nuevo liderazgo político en el país.
Yo quiero decir que en todos los países ocurren irregularidades. Pero también quiero decir que en todos los países donde hemos estado y en todo lo que hemos observado, acá el proceso despojalón está muy bien organizado y me aterra bastante en cuanto a la pro democracia del Paraguay. Es lo mejor que he visto en ninguna otra parte*, manifestó el ex presidente de los Estados Unidos, Jimmy Carter, quien mantuvo un almuerzo con los líderes de los observadores internacionales y los tres ex candidatos presidenciados, Domingo Laino, Guillermo Caballero y Jorge Luis Wada, en el cual llegaron a un acuerdo conjunto de respetar los resultados de las elecciones nacionales realizadas ayer, rechazar la interferencia militar en el proceso democrático y trabajar coordinadamente hasta que el nuevo presidente asuma el poder el próximo 15 de agosto.
Memorias en que Jimmy Carter (medio de camisa blanca) se reunió con la Junta Electoral Central, donde mantuvo una reunión con el líder de la.iniación ante de la rueda de prensa. Se dió a diad que el encuentro fue protocolar.

Jimmy Carter, el ex mandatario norteamericano, manifestó en rueda de prensa cumplida a la noche en el hotel Guaraní, su preocupación por la cancelación de los cómputos de los comicios presidenciales realizados ayer. Destacó que el corte de líneas de la organización SAKA no fue accidental. Además acusa que el gobierno de Asunción, aunque proteste, no haga caso a los conflictos que se generan en las calles de nuestra ciudad. También expresó que el gobierno de Asunción no atenta contra los derechos humanos y viola los lazos de nuestro país.