

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
Asunción, 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 -- Asunción, Colonel Oviedo, 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 benefitted 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 SAKA, 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 lists. 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 balloting, 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 1865 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 responses.

.. 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

93% 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 97.3% of the mesas and 98.6% of the responding sites.

.. Most importantly, the overall voting process was satisfactory at 92.5% of the mesas and 94.5% of the responding sites.

Irregularities were more common in the interior. Our delegates witnessed intimidation 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 tabulations 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 this disenfranchisement of prospective voters and violation of Paraguayan's rights to enter the country. Ironically, while Paraguay welcomed hundred 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

democratic opening here to continue and expand.

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 remains committed to supporting their efforts.

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**PARAGUAY 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

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

Elizabeth Bagley
Board Member
National Democratic Institute
UNITED STATES

Mark Feierstein
Senior Program Officer
National Democratic Institute
UNITED STATES

Enrique Bernales
Director
Constitution and Society
PERU

Cedric Grant
Former Guyanese Ambassador to the
United States
GUYANA

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

Pedro Antonio Gomez de la Fuente
Director
National Electoral Council
ARGENTINA

Curtis Cutter
President
Interworld Consultants, Inc.
UNITED STATES

Steve Griner
Program Officer
National Democratic Institute
UNITED STATES

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

Pierre Letamendia
Deputy Mayor of Souraide
FRANCE

Kenneth Melley
Board Member
National Democratic Institute
UNITED STATES

Bonginkosi Mhlanga
Member of Election Commission of Pan
Africanist Congress of Azania
SOUTH AFRICA

Edgardo Mimica
National Director
Project Chile
CHILE

Beverly Nagel
Director of Latin American Studies
Carleton College
UNITED STATES

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

Marta Perez
Member of Convergencia
MEXICO

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

Emmanuel Chinkwita 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

Mikhail 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 Wollack
President
National Democratic Institute
UNITED STATES

STAFF

Rob Black
Logistics Assistant

Mary Hill
Logistics Manager

Katie Kelsch
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:

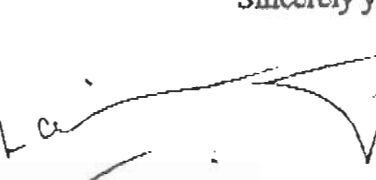
We have the honor of inviting you again to attend the May 9th general elections in Paraguay as an international observer.

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.

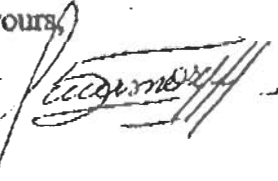
Sincerely yours,



Guillermo Caballero Vargas
Presidential Candidate
Alianza Encuentro
Nacional



Domingo Lafno
Presidential Candidate
Partido Liberal Radical
Auténtico



Juan Carlos Wasmosy
Presidential Candidate
Asociación Nacional Repu-
blicana - Partido Colorado

THE
CARTER CENTER
OF EMORY UNIVERSITY



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,

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

Delegation's Presence Assures Fair National Elections in Paraguay

On May 9, voters in Paraguay elected Juan Carlos Wasmosy as the country's first civilian president in four decades. To assure 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 Council, based at The Carter Center of Emory University (CCEU), and the Washington, D.C.-based National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI).

The elections offered Paraguay its first opportunity in history to complete 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 1989, after the fall of dictator Gen. Alfredo Stroessner.

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Delegation's Presence Assures Fairness in Paraguay's National Elections

Paraguay
continued from page 1

Other top candidates for president were Guillermo Caballero Vargas of the centrist coalition National Encounter and Domingo Laino of the Authentic Radical Liberal Party. Thirty-three percent of voters cast ballots for Mr. Laino; Mr. Vargas received 25 percent of the vote.

Although Paraguay held a democratic national election in 1989, many people there were concerned about the integrity of the May 9 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 statement 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 so serious in most countries, but in one like Paraguay, just emerging tenuously 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 reassembled in Asuncion after the elections to analyze the electoral process.

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

Despite the irregularities, the observer team determined they were not significant enough to affect the election outcome. "The overall voting process was satisfactory at 92.5 percent of the voting tables that we surveyed,"

President Carter said.

Rodrigo Carazo, former president of Costa Rica and a member of the Council of Freely Elected Heads of Government, and Sen. Al Graham of Canada, 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 made it possible for all candidates to accept the results calmly and graciously."

"Although international observers did not personally witness any significant negative incidents, 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 Guyana 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 Pastor, executive secretary of the Council and director of CCEU's Latin American and Caribbean Program. "The next step for the hemisphere is to forge new bonds to preserve, consolidate, and deepen the new democracies." ■

Los votos para presidente y vicepresidente

A tres días de las elecciones generales, y sin contar con los datos oficiales de la Junta Electoral Central, publicamos en este espacio los datos proporcionados por los diferentes partidos políticos así como también por el consorcio independiente Sakā.

El cómputo paralelo de Sakā otorga a la ANR 311.584 votos, un 38,6%, al PLRA 252.330 votos, lo que hace un 31,47%, y al EN 217.384 votos, lo que hace un 27,11%. Otros suman

un total de 20.491 votos, un 2,55%. Según la ANR, ellos obtuvieron un total de 360.334 votos, lo que hace un 41,33%; el PLRA obtuvo 283.799 un 32,55%, y el EN 204.629 votos, un 23,47%. Otros representan el total de 23.182 votos, un 2,66%. Por su parte, el PLRA otorga a la ANR un total de votos 202.512, lo que representa el 37,61%; el PLRA tiene 193.894 votos, un 36,01; y el EN 128.452 votos, un 23,86%. En otros se cuentan 13.594 votos, un 2,52%.

Según ANR	LISTA	VOTOS	%
	ANR	360.334	41.33
	PLRA	283.799	32.55
	EN	204.629	23.47
	Otros	23.182	2.66
	Total	871.944	100

Según PLRA	LISTA	VOTOS	%
	ANR	202.512	37.61
	PLRA	193.894	36.01
	EN	128.452	23.86
	Otros	13.594	2.52
	Total	538.452	100

Según SAKĀ	LISTA	VOTOS	%
	ANR	311.584	38.6
	PLRA	252.330	31.47
	EN	217.384	27.11
	Otros	20.491	2.55
	Total	801.789	100

Governing Party's Candidate Wins Paraguay's Presidential Election

By JAMES BROOKE

Special to The New York Times

ASUNCIÓN, Paraguay, May 10 — After voting marked by fraud and sabotage, Paraguayan politicians closed ranks today and recognized Juan Carlos Wasmosy as the winner of the first democratic elections in this South American nation's 182-year history.

Independent election analysts said fraud had not been widespread enough to have changed the outcome, which gave Mr. Wasmosy of the governing Colorado Party a seven percentage point lead over his closest rival, Domingo Laino of the Liberal Party.

"With all the irregularities, Wasmosy only got three extra percentage points," said Esteban Caballero Carriosa. "People are accepting the results." Mr. Caballero is a director of Saka, a consortium of private groups that had intended to provide an independent vote count on Sunday night. The count was delayed until today by police harassment and by sabotage of computer transmission lines by the state telephone company.

Fraud Insignificant, Carter Says

Former President Jimmy Carter, who is leading a delegation of international observers here, said today, "If the race had come within one to two percentage points, the fraud would

A clear result in a vote marred by fraud.

have been a significant factor."

His group checked 1,855 voting tables at polling stations throughout the country. "The overall voting process was satisfactory at 92.5 percent of the voting tables" surveyed, Mr. Carter said.

Mr. Wasmosy, a conservative construction and ranching magnate, is to be inaugurated on Aug. 15 for a five-year term. With his election, the Colorado Party will extend its unbroken hold on Paraguay's presidency past the half-century mark, after coming to power here in 1947.

Although the Colorados won a large share of Paraguay's 125 congressional seats and a majority of the 17 state governorships, the results indicate that their monolithic grip on the electorate has slipped since February 1989, when Gen. Alfredo Stroessner was toppled in a coup after 34 years in power.

"An important fact is that the opposition collectively won almost 60 percent of the vote," said Mr. Carter,

whose delegation is from the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, a Washington-based group financed by public and private groups.

As Mr. Wasmosy prepares to become the first civilian President in the memory of most of Paraguay's 4.4 million people, several observers, including Mr. Carter, worry that the powerful military will overshadow a man who has never held elective office.

Army Leader Pledges Loyalty

Early this morning, before any official results were known, Gen. Lino Oviedo, an army commander, appeared on national television in dress uniform to announce his obedience to Mr. Wasmosy and to warn that Paraguay's press had "trampled my rights to privacy and dignity."

In an interview today, Mr. Wasmosy, a powerfully built 54-year-old who is an engineer by training, dismissed the idea of military dominance with a wave of his hand.

"I am going to be President and commander in chief of the armed forces," he said with the assurance of a man who directs a business empire that employs 6,500 people.

One of Paraguay's wealthiest businessmen, Mr. Wasmosy made his fortune in the 1970's as head of a consortium of Paraguayan companies that

won contracts to build the Itaipu Dam, the world's largest hydroelectric dam.

In the interview, Mr. Wasmosy said he would reduce Paraguay's isolation by backing a project to connect the heart of South America with South Atlantic ports through an international waterway based on the Paraguay River. An advocate of free-market growth and low tariffs, Mr. Wasmosy said he backed Paraguay's taking part in a regional common market, Mercosur. He described possible participation in the late 1990's in a free-trade pact with the United States as "a wonderful dream."

Mr. Wasmosy had trailed in most pre-election polls. His victory left many opposition politicians bitter.

"If conditions had been equal, we would have won," said Mr. Laino, who won about 32 percent of the vote, according to a projection of an unofficial tally of 69 percent of the vote. Mr. Laino asserted that Liberal Party slates had been handicapped when soldiers closed land bridges to prevent Paraguayans from coming home from Brazil and Argentina to vote.

A third major candidate, Guillermo Caballero Vargas of the National Encounter movement, trailed in third place with 27 percent.

Ruling Party Wins in Paraguay

Presidential Election Called 'Free and Fair'

By Don Podesta

Washington Post Foreign Service

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 multi-party, 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 remarked before the election that the military would not put up with a change of ruling party.

Carter also complained that the phone lines of the independent tabulation-monitoring group Saka had been cut off Sunday afternoon and had not been restored even after he interceded with 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 counted, a figure in line with the much slower official count. Domingo Laino of the Authentic Radical Liberal Party was second with 31.5 percent and Guillermo Caballero Vargas of the National Encounter party third with 27.1 percent.

There were several reports of Colorado partisans harassing voters Sunday, and a judge ordered the border 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 incidents could not have changed the outcome.

The Colorados, who had been badly split after a bruising primary that Wasmosy at first appeared to have lost, trailed Caballero Vargas in pre-election polls. But in the closing days of the campaign, they "were able to regroup their electorate," Esteban Caballero of Saka said.

Wasmosy, 54, 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 is as minister of integration in Rodriguez's government.

In a press conference tonight, Wasmosy responded to questions about punishing human rights violations during the 35-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 Colorados have long been allied with the military and were the party of dictator Alfredo Stroessner, who after nearly 35 years in power was ousted by Rodriguez four years ago.

Before the election, many Paraguayans had feared that the military might intervene if the Colorados appeared headed 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 BROOKE

Special to The New York Times

ASUNCION, Paraguay, May 9 — Given the chance to vote for a civilian leader in their first free presidential election, Paraguayan voters responded today with a heavy and enthusiastic turnout.

About 75 percent of the voters cast ballots in this country of 4.4 million, the last South American nation to adopt a system requiring democratic election of a civilian president.

Three surveys of voters leaving polling stations indicated a close, three-way race between Juan Carlos Wasmosy, the candidate of the governing Colorado Party; Domingo Laino, candidate of the Liberal Party, and Guillermo Caballero Vargas, candidate of a new electoral movement, the National Encounter.

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

"People want a change — I'm a lifelong Colorado, but I'm voting for Caballero Vargas," said Ramon Yodice Sabadino, a retired civil servant, as he waited to vote in a working-class

neighborhood here.

Each of the three major candidates claimed victory tonight. Six contenders were 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," former President Jimmy Carter said after having lunch with the three major candidates here. "This obviously includes the rejection of any military interference in the electoral process."

Mr. Carter is one of about 300 foreign election monitors who are visiting Paraguay to observe the voting.

Before the polls opened, Paraguay's President, Gen. Andres Rodriguez, said, "For the first time in our history, I believe that every political party has a chance to win."

But old authoritarian habits endured in some areas.

Here in the capital, an opposition radio and television station was lightly damaged by a bombing and rifle attack early in the morning. The computer system mysteriously collapsed for several hours today at the central election board.

At the borders of this landlocked nation, armed soldiers blocked Paraguayans from returning from Brazil and Argentina to vote. By tradition, officers in Paraguay's Army are members of the governing Colorado Party, and emigrants are usually supporters of opposition parties.

"We want to vote! We want to vote!" dozens of Paraguayans chanted in front of the troops who blocked international bridges.

Political analysts said they were worried that the Colorado political machine would throw the victory to their candidate if the vote was close.

"The electoral system is still in the hands of the Colorados," Esteban Caballero, a social scientist here, said.

Under the new Constitution, Paraguayan presidents are barred from serving more than one term. This clause was adopted to avoid another dictatorship resembling that of Gen. Alfredo Stroessner, who seized power in 1954 and kept himself in office through a series of fraudulent elections until he was overthrown by General Rodriguez in a coup in 1989. Mr. Stroessner, now 80, lives in exile in Brasilia.

Paraguayans Vote For Civilian Leader

Polling Orderly in Historic Popular Election

THE WASHINGTON POST

MONDAY, MAY 10, 1993

By Don Podesta

Washington Post Foreign Service

ASUNCION, Paraguay, May 9—More than a million Paraguayans voted today for a new president and congress in the first popular elections for a civilian leader in the country's history.

Early exit polls conducted by television and radio stations disagreed on the likely winner in the presidential race, as each of the three top candidates appeared to be getting roughly 30 percent of the vote. On the basis of a lead of 2 percentage points in one of the exit surveys, the ruling Colorado Party claimed victory minutes after the polls closed, and its followers took to the streets to celebrate.

The phone lines of the independent election watchdog group Saka, which was conducting a parallel count, went dead this afternoon, raising questions of sabotage. However, international monitors and U.S. Ambassador Jon Glassman said it was too early to judge whether there had been any significant irregularities.

But even before a clear winner emerged, what mattered to Paraguay was that the elections came off at all. The country has long been dominated by the armed forces, and the traditional means of choosing a new government here has been coup d'etat.

The three leading candidates—Juan Carlos Wasmosy of the Colorado Party, Guillermo Caballero Vargas of the National Encounter and Domingo Laino of the Authentic Radical Liberal Party—differed little in their platforms. All supported modernizing the state and the economy through privatization and professed broad democratic principles.

Ten days before the vote, a senior army commander, Gen. Lino Oviedo, said the armed forces were not prepared to accept a ruling party other than the Colorado and would continue to "co-govern" the country, raising fears that the elections would be disrupted.



BY JOSE ARAUJO FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

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.

Carter had lunch today with Wasmosy, Laino and Caballero Vargas and announced 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, proclaimed 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 yield control of the government after ruling this nation of 4.4 million people for 46 years. The country's 132,000 government workers and 16,000-man armed forces heavily support Colorado, which raised doubts that they would be willing to allow an opposition party to be declared the winner or to govern.

Early this morning, a television and radio broadcasting station was attacked with a grenade and automatic rifle fire, but there were no serious injuries. At polling places around the capital today, there were scattered arguments and delays, but for the most part the voting was orderly.

In addition to a president, Paraguayans voted for a new 45-seat Senate and 80-member House of Deputies, 17 regional governors and 168 state council members.

Since it became South America's first independent country in 1811, Paraguay has been ruled almost without interruption by a series of generals or civilian dictators. One of the most enduring of these was Gen. Alfredo Stroessner, who ran the country as a personal fiefdom for nearly 35 years before being overthrown in 1989 by Gen. Andres Rodriguez, the current president.

Rodriguez, who had been a close associate of Stroessner, surprised many by quickly opening the political process and allowing the opposition and the press to operate unimpeded. But he called a national election three months after his coup and was confirmed as president after a campaign that gave the nascent opposition little time to organize.

This time, the three leading parties campaigned hard, drawing thousands of supporters to mass rallies and organizing caravans throughout the capital and countryside.

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 planning to compile an independent vote count.

Quick intervention by ex-President Jimmy Carter, on the scene as an international election monitor, helped get the vote-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 Guaraní 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 attested with my fellow participants that the election, representing the first democratic transfer of power in Paraguay's history, was by and large fair, not dirty.

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-blighted 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 jornada realmente histórica en la evolución del Paraguay hacia la democracia y la libertad, en que por primera vez un gobierno electo 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 Gral. Lino Oviedo. Sostuvo que de no ser erradicada esa intervención de FF.AA., difícilmente podrá consolidarse la democracia en el país. Asimismo, cuestionó 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 restablecidas.

En la conferencia de prensa convocada ayer en el hotel Excelsior, 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 el proceso de votación en la capital, Cnel. Oviedo, Ciudad del Este, Concepción, Encarnación, Pedro Juan Caballero y algunas comunidades del área rural. Añadió que han hecho un resumen de lo observado en las elecciones anteriores del '89, '91 y las que se realizarán ahora. Apuntó que el Paraguay, obviamente, ha tenido un gran progreso hacia la democracia, la libertad, y en materia derechos humanos desde el '89.

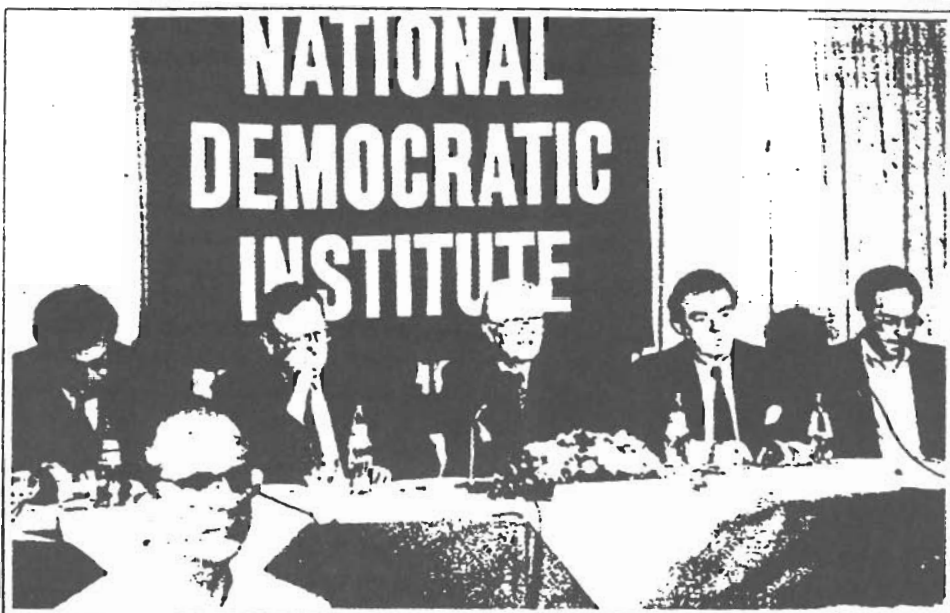
En cuanto a los puntos negativos observados, el ex presidente de los EE.UU. dijo que los apoderados del Partido Colorado no quisieron hablar con ellos en Ciudad del Este, pese a las invitaciones del Gobierno, que recibieron para estar como observadores de los comicios.

Seguidamente, señaló que particularmente condenan la interferencia hecha por el Gobierno y la ANTELCO a la organización Saka, que le impidió tener el resultado del cómputo paralelo de las elecciones en forma responsable.

"Todo el mundo sabía que Saka con su sistema computarizado estaba ligado a través de líneas dedicadas a todo el país. Estas líneas estaban muy cuidadosamente instaladas, pero al mediodía de ayer (por el domingo) esas líneas se cortaron. Personalmente fui a visitar al presidente Rodríguez por esto. El hizo un llamado a la ANTELCO y ellos nos aseguraron que las líneas estarían operando habilitadas", subrayó.

Agregó que, sin embargo, se llegó a la medianoche y no se devolvieron las líneas telefónicas a Saka, ni las 7 líneas alternativas que pudieron ser instaladas en 15 minutos, si es que tenían intenciones de hacerlo.

**"FUE DELIBERADO
EL INTENTO DE QUE
SAKA NO TENGA LOS
DATOS SOBRE LOS
RESULTADOS"**



El ex presidente de EE.UU Jimmy Carter, centro, junto a los demás integrantes del consejo de la NDI, durante la conferencia de prensa brindada ayer sobre lo observado en las elecciones generales del pasado domingo.

"Hasta esta mañana (por ayer), Saka todavía no tenía las líneas para conectar la información del interior con sus computadores. En mi opinión, esto fue un intento deliberado para prevenir que Saka colecciona y analice los datos de los sitios de votación del país. A pesar de esto, completó su conteo rápido en la noche y como hubo una diferencia sustancial entre los tres candidatos, entonces no se incurrió en un error que pudo ser fatal", enfatizó.

Añadió que otra cuestión que le causó pena fue el atentado al Canal 13, hecho que consideraron como un intento de intimidación a los electores. "Estamos agradecidos que no hubo heridos, pero esto es un error muy serio. No debería ser permitido en el futuro. Espero que se encuentre a los culpables", remarcó.

Igualmente, puntualizó que estuvieron preocupados por el cierre de las fronteras, que impidió la entrada de compatriotas al país el día de las elecciones. "Fue irónico que los observadores internacionales de hasta Rusia y Sudáfrica estaban bienvenidos al país y los ciudadanos paraguayos fueron parados en las fronteras de Argentina y Brasil", recalcó.

REPUTACION DEL PAÍS DAÑADA POR INTROMISION DE MILITARES

En otro momento, Carter refirió que la gran reputación que merece el Paraguay en su marcha hacia la democracia, "ha sido seriamente dañada por la intromisión inaceptable en el proceso político de los militares".

"El Gral. Oviedo ha dicho muy claro desde el comienzo, que él violaría la Constitución de este país e involucrarse como comandante militar en el proceso electoral. Esto lo hizo abiertamente, en acciones y declaraciones que eran intimidatorias. Una cosa que dijo es que el Partido Colorado y los militares cogobernarían juntos para siempre", puntualizó.

Expresó, seguidamente, que esto no sería problema en otros lugares, pero es una aflicción grande para la reputación del Paraguay, teniendo en cuenta que viene de una larga dic-

tadura.

"En mi país -dijo- la publicidad no fue sobre el hecho de que Paraguay está entrando en una nueva era de democracia y libertad. No, los medios estaban diciendo que un general estaba amenazando con irrumpir el proceso. Sobre esto hablamos mucho con los tres candidatos y con el presidente actual. Esperamos que tomen acciones fuertes para separar a los militares del proceso político en el Paraguay".

"ESPERAMOS QUE TOMEN ACCIONES FUERTES PARA SEPARAR A LOS MILITARES DEL PROCESO POLITICO"

informes.

En otro orden, señaló que mucho falta por hacer para construir una confianza en el proceso electoral. A ese respecto, indicó que les preocupaba la tardanza de los informes de la Junta Electoral Central en cuanto a los resultados que, además, esta manejada en su mayor parte por colorados, en desmedro de los representantes de la oposición que no pueden acceder a los

"No hay duda de que los resultados finales de esta elección que todavía no han sido publicados, son puntos que van a cambiar la historia. El ganador de las elecciones tiene grandes oportunidades y desafíos. El siguiente gobierno puede ser restringido por elementos autoritarios, especialmente los militares, que podrían tratar de retrasar el crecimiento de Paraguay hacia la democracia", expresó.



Asunción, lunes 10 de mayo de 1993

"Es lo mejor que he visto"



"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 democrático está muy bien organizado y me alienta 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 presidenciables, Domingo Laino, Guillermo Caballero Vargas y Juan Carlos Wasmosy, 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.



Asunción, lunes 10 de mayo de 1993



Momentos en que Jimmy Carter (medio de camisa blanca) se retira de la Junta Electoral Central, donde mantuvo una entrevista con el titular de la institución antes de la rueda de prensa. Se difundió que el encuentro fue protocolar.

Jimmy Carter, el ex mandatario norteamericano, manifestó en rueda de prensa cumplida a medianoche en el hotel Guaraní, su preocupación por la lentitud de los cómputos de los comicios presidenciales realizados ayer. Destacó que el corte de líneas de la organización SAKA no fue accidental. Además apuntó que era prematuro que uno de los movimientos declarase la victoria. También expresó que el cierre de frontera a los paraguayos residentes en Argentina atenta contra los derechos humanos y viola las leyes de nuestro país.