



THE CARTER CENTER



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Friday, April 6, 2001

CONTACT: Deanna Congileo 511 949 0957
Jean Freedberg 511 949 0954

**ARRIVAL STATEMENT BY FORMER U.S. PRESIDENT JIMMY CARTER
ON BEHALF OF THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTE / CARTER CENTER
OBSERVER DELEGATION TO THE PERU 2001 ELECTIONS**

LIMA, PERU....On behalf of The Carter Center and the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI), I want to say our joint delegation is honored to be in Peru to observe this historic election.

Peru has experienced extraordinary political developments in the past year. We admire Peruvians for their courage during these turbulent times and for their resolve to uphold the democratic values that most nations in our hemisphere now enjoy.

Joining me as co-leaders of our 35-person delegation are Ramiro de Leon Carpio, former President of Guatemala and current Vice President of Guatemala's Legislative Assembly, and Peter McPherson, President of Michigan State University, former Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development, and Deputy Secretary of Treasury in the Reagan Administration. We are also honored to have Eni Faleomavaega, Member of the U.S. House of Representatives. In all, our group includes 35 observers representing 11 countries.

The Carter Center and NDI were in Peru last year as official observers throughout the entire election process. We issued several reports urging reforms to bring the process up to international standards. When these changes did not occur, we decided we could not appear to sanction a seriously flawed process and chose not to observe the run-off election in May 2000. This decision corresponded to the decisions of other international and domestic observer groups.

Following the fraudulent re-election of Alberto Fujimori, we supported efforts of the Organization of American States to facilitate a dialogue on improving Peruvian democracy. We have been particularly pleased to witness the significant progress that has been made in the past five months in the electoral arena. Officials of the new government, the political candidates, and Peruvian citizen organizations have come together to establish new electoral conditions that enjoy much greater confidence of the people.

The environment for campaigning and the technical preparations for this election are greatly improved, but we urge Peruvians to be patient during the election process. It is normal to expect some delays and some administrative problems. In particular, the new formula for electing the Congress is complicated and could create some difficulties.

We will be at polling sites in 9 of Peru's 25 electoral districts to observe and evaluate the process and to report our findings to Peruvians and to the international community. We expect to publicly report our preliminary evaluation of the electoral process during a press conference here on Tuesday.

I want to emphasize that our delegates are here only to support the will of the Peruvian people. Every member of our delegation is completely neutral with regard to the results of the election, and none of us will interfere in the electoral process.

We look forward to a festive day on Sunday as Peruvians exercise their democratic right to vote, and we urge all Peruvians to go to the polls to choose their next leaders.

#####