Observing the 1997 Special Elections Process in Liberia

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The Carter Center

Members of the 40-person Carter Center delegation gather for a group dinner on July 21, 1997, two days after the Special Elections in Liberia.

Preface and Acknowledgments

The Carter Center has followed closely events in Liberia since the onset of civil war in December 1989, when Charles Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia launched a rebellion against Samuel Doe's authoritarian regime. The tragic conflict that followed led to hundreds of thousands of deaths, refugees, and internally displaced.

Between 1991-96, President Carter and Center staff made numerous trips to the region to meet with leaders of the various interim governments and factions, members of Liberian civil society, and others in attempts to forge a workable peace agreement. In 1992, the Center opened a field office in Monrovia to support President Carter's high-level involvement as well as grassroots efforts to promote community development and peacebuilding dialogue among Liberians.

In April 1996, full-scale fighting broke out in Monrovia, forcing The Carter Center and other international organizations to abandon field operations. However, the renewed fighting also spurred another round of peace talks, which ultimately led to the August 1996 Abuja II agreement, which laid the foundation for a reconstituted transitional government and set new timetables for disarmament, demobilization, and Special Elections to return the country to constitutional order.

In this hopeful context, The Carter Center initiated the 1997 Liberia Election Project with the aim of reinforcing the peace process and supporting successful elections. The Center reopened its Monrovia office in April 1997 and dispatched three pre-election missions. For the July 19 Special Elections, the Center sent a 40-member international observer delegation co-led by President Carter, former U.S. Sen. Paul Simon, and former President Nicephore Soglo of Benin. Charles Taylor won the presidential election by a large margin, receiving more than 75 percent of the vote, in a process the Center and other international observ viewed as fair but far from perfect. In many ways, the elections reflected the legacy of the recent conflict including the realities of military and political power on the ground as well as Liberians' desire to secure peace.

Parallel to its observation activities, the Cen implemented a set of human rights initiatives to support Liberian human rights nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and reinforce the electoral process. Among these was a training workshop fo Liberian human rights groups in June 1997. After the elections, the Center sent another mission to help Liberian human rights NGOs identify post-election priorities. In September, the Center org nized a mission to explore possible areas of futur assistance.

Support for the Liberia Project and this rep was provided by the U.S. Agency for Internatio Development (USAID) through the Internation Foundation for Election Systems (IFES). Throug out the process, the Center worked closely with IFES personnel and consultants and deeply appr ates their collaboration and fine contribution to Liberia's transition. Denise Dauphinais, Peter W iams, Ched Flego, David Earl, and Deborah Barron—the IFES team in Monrovia—made ou work in Liberia possible and demonstrated profe sionalism and good humor throughout a difficul process.

The Center also received important suppo from the government of the Federal Republic o Germany, which provided key funding to purch election observation equipment and materials.

Several people who played important roles this Project deserve special thanks. First and for most, I want to acknowledge the contribution Terrence Lyons, a fellow at the Brookings Insti specializing in political transitions and African politics. Dr. Lyons took a five-month leave fro Brookings to serve as the Center's senior projec advisor and Monrovia office director from Apr August 1997. His role in managing the Monro office and field operations was instrumental.

I am also grateful to Rob Black, assistant

project advisor in the Monrovia office, and Kendall Dwyer, Monrovia logistics coordinator. They worked closely with Dr. Lyons to keep the Center's Monrovia operations on course and were especially critical to the safe, successful deployment of election observers. The Center benefited from excellent support provided by our in-county Liberia staff, including Gertrude Koroma, Z. Flomo Miller, and Curtis Majekodunmi. In addition, Carol Jeffrey assisted the Center in organizing and facilitating the May 1997 IECOM workshop. In Atlanta for most but not all of the project, Sara Tindall of the Center's Conflict Resolution Program coordinated our operations and helped backstop the Monrovia team. During the elections, several other Center staff played important roles in Atlanta and Monrovia, including Melinda Adams, Deanna Congileo, Curtis Kohlhaas, Greg Martinez, Tim Lynch, and Mike Meenan.

Many others contributed to the project. Susan Palmer of IFES has a deep knowledge of Liberia and was for many years the Center's principal expert on the country. Chip Carter, Jason Carter, Shelley McConnell, and Sara Tindall served as pre-election medium-term observers and as election-day observers. Richard Wike, a research analyst for Beth Shapiro and Associates, designed the Center's quantitative sample. Robert Pastor of the Center's Latin American and Caribbean Program helped organize the delegation's observation work and overall direction. Other Center staff who joined the observer delegation also deserve thanks, including Ozong Agborsangaya, David Carroll, Tom Crick, Erik Oliver, and Dana Trammell. Helena Nygren Krug, human rights consultant to the Center, played an important role in coordinating the Center's human rights training programs and in conducting a post-election assessment.

I want to express sincere thanks to each Carter Center delegate who sacrificed his/her time. Each accepted responsibilities under often harsh conditions without complaint, demonstrating serious commitment throughout the mission.

The Carter Center is especially grateful to Marie Angélique Savané, former director of the Africa Division of the U.N. Population Fund, member of the Center's International Negotiation Network (INN) and an important part of the Liberia delegation. In the years before the election, Ms. Savané and Lisbet Palme, in collaboration with former Director of the Center's Conflict Resolution Program Dayle Spencer, played strong roles in Carter Center/INN efforts to promote the peace process in Liberia, including a 1992 INN mission there.

Although they were not part of the Center's most recent work, I want to thank the Center's Monrovia office directors during 1992-96, Paul McDermott and John Langlois, and the local staff who assisted them including Fatu Mensah, George Karneh, Jackson Wonde, and Kormasa Taylor.

Dr. Lyons drafted the core of this report. David Carroll added several sections and managed final editing and revisions with help from Carter Center interns Charles Hall, Angie Elleman, and Adam Taylor. Other contributors include Mr. Black, Ms. Dwyer, Dr. McConnell, Ms. Nygren Krug, and Ms. Tindall. I reviewed the report as did several other Center staff, including Jason Carter, Tom Crick, Deanna Congileo, and Erik Oliver. Laina Wilk of the Center's Public Information Office proofed the final text, coordinated its layout, and prepared it for publication.

To fully understand them, Liberia's 1997 Special Elections must be placed in the context of the country's long civil war and recent peace process. Although the elections had some serious problems, including overwhelming advantage enjoyed by Charles Taylor in terms of resources, access to media, and organization, they still marked a critical step forward in consolidating peace. Still, many challenges lie ahead on the road to lasting peace, genuine democracy, and national reconciliation. The Carter Center remains committed to helping Liberia meet these challenges. ■

Gordon L. Streeb

Executive Summary

On Dec. 24, 1989, Charles Taylor launched a rebellion against Samuel Doe's regime, igniting a civil conflict in Liberia that lasted nearly seven years. As a result, one-tenth of the prewar population died, and hundreds of thousands of people became refugees and internally displaced. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) intervened with military force in August 1990 but was unable to end the war, as an array of armed factions fought for control of the country.

After countless peace initiatives and a serious eruption of fighting in the capital of Monrovia in April 1996, the latest of 13 peace agreements—Abuja II—was signed in Abuja, Nigeria, in August 1996. This accord paved the way for a transitional government, disarmament, demobilization, and the 1997 Special Elections.

To implement demobilization and disarmament, ECOWAS was enlarged and made more effective. Demobilization was relatively successful in collecting arms but was less successful at breaking the armed factions' command and control structures. Several of the major faction leaders—including Charles Taylor, Alhaji Kromah, and George Boley—turned their militias into political parties. Various traditional political parties organized themselves into an Alliance of Political Parties, nominating Cletus Wortorson as its presidential candidate. Splits in the Alliance, however, led several prominent politicians to withdraw and launch candidacies with other parties, including Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, Togba-Nah Tipoteh, and Baccus Matthews.

The Carter Center's involvement in Liberia dates from 1991. At the conclusion of the Yamoussoukro I summit in June 1991, the Center was publicly requested to help in the peace process and with eventual elections. In 1992, the Center opened an office in Monrovia to support its work there. However, fighting in April 1996 forced its closure. With Abuja II's establishment in August 1996, the Center renewed efforts and began developing plans for its Liberia Election Project. In April 1997, the Center reopened its Monrovia office under the direction of Terrence Lyons, who served as senior project advisor.

In the pre-election period, the Center sent three missions in March, April, and June 1997. The March mission, led by the Center's Gordon Streeb, assessed electoral preparations and explored how the Center could best support a credible election process. The team reported serious concerns about the lack of a level playing field, the need for an electoral code of conduct, and the need to establish effective, neutral electoral institutions to administer the elections.

The Center's April delegation noted that progress had been made, including the work of the newly established Independent Elections Commission (IECOM) but remained concerned about problems with the elections' preparations and timetable. Delegates thus recommended to postpone the election date beyond the scheduled May 30. They reported serious problems regarding access by political parties to the countryside and media and fears related to security. The mission raised the issue of post-election governance with various leaders, but some, most notably Charles Taylor, resisted even considering the suggestion.

After it became clear that it would be difficult to meet the schedule, ECOWAS organized a consultation with Liberia's political parties on May 21, 1997. This resulted in the release of a Special Elections package (including election laws) and an agreement to postpone elections until July 19. Most observers believed that the abbreviated timetable favored Charles Taylor's National People's Party, the faction with the best organization and most resources. At IECOM's request, The Carter Center coordinated a workshop on the Special Elections Package on May 29-31, during which the Inter-Party Advisory Committee (IIPAC) was formed. IIPAC sought to bring together the parties with IECOM to resolve issues and communicate electoral information.

Erik Oliver

A group of Liberian boys sit in front of the former Lutheran Training Institute near the village of Voinjama.

As part of its parallel effort to promote and protect human rights throughout the electoral process, the Center conducted a human rights assessment mission in April, followed by an intensive training program for the Liberian human rights community on June 18-25, 1997.

Earlier that month, the Center deployed two medium-term observers to assess the campaign process and registration status. The Center's final pre-election mission visited Liberia from June 26-28, led by former U.S. President Jimmy Carter. It focused on:

1) Voter registration.
2) Political party campaigning.
3) IECOM election management problems.

The delegation concluded that despite some obstacles, preparations seemed to be in place for an adequate but far-from-perfect election and that such an election probably was the only alternative to violence. After the mission, the Center deployed another set of medium-term observers to continue monitoring the registration process. The Center coordinated activities with IECOM, ECOMOG, the EU, IFES, UNOMIL, and other international observers to address common issues relating to logistics, communications, security, and information sharing.

For the July 19 elections, the Center organized a 40-member team of international election monitors. President Carter, former President Nicephore Soglo of Benin, and former U.S. Sen. Paul Simon co-led the mission. Carter Center delegates were deployed in 10 of Liberia's 13 counties. On election day, they watched polling site openings, visited numerous sites over the course of the day, and observed vote counts at preassigned sites. At each site visited, monitors filled out process evaluation forms. The delegation observed the voting process at approximately 10 percent of all polling sites.

The Carter Center delegation also conducted a parallel vote tabulation, or "quick count," for an independent data source on the results and to facilitate a possible role in calming fears or mediating any post-election disputes between parties or candidates. Despite some logistical difficulties, the Center's quick count provided an important check on the official results and helped President Carter in his meetings with political party leaders during the days after the election. Early results indicated Charles Taylor and the NPP winning an overwhelming majority of the votes. Immediately after election day, President Carter and other delegates met with major political candidates, appealing for each to

accept the results. According to official results (released later), Taylor won the presidency with over 75 percent of the vote, followed by Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf with 9.6 percent. Taylor's NPP also dominated the House and the Senate (see Appendix I).

The Center's July 21, 1997, Preliminary Statement concluded the election was peaceful. It applauded the high turnout, ECOMOG's vital role in providing security and keeping the process orderly, and the work of domestic observers and party agents. Delegates reported that the voting process at nearly every polling site visited "functioned normally" and/or with only "some minor irregularities." At the same time, they noted some problems, particularly with registration lists, access to media and resources, voter education, and complicated forms. The team stressed, however, that these problems were not sufficiently serious to have altered the people's opportunity to select their leaders.

The Carter Center understands that an election is not by itself sufficient to institutionalize democracy. A strong civil society, on-going peace-building initiatives, and human rights, to name a few, also are needed. In the critical period following the election, the Center continued to help Liberians build on the encouraging progress represented by the election and on implementing the Abuja Accords. In early August, several weeks after the elections, the Center organized a mission to assess the challenges of promoting human rights and democratic consolidation in the post-election environment and to identify priorities for doing so. Liberian human rights leaders expressed concern that the departure of the international community's "shield" would gradually give way to repression and human rights abuses.

In early September, the Center organized its final assessment mission, led by Gordon Streeb, to explore possible areas for The Carter Center to assist the Liberian government and civil society after the elections. The team reported progress but noted some early warning signs, specifically regarding promotions in the police force and the rush to create a human rights commission without thorough consultation with the local human rights community.

Based on that trip and follow-up, the Center is exploring potential projects for agricultural extension, preparing a national economic development strategy, judicial training, human rights education, training for journalists and media technology, and training for the new human rights commission.

Overall, The Carter Center concluded that the 1997 Liberia Special Elections must be assessed in the context of the broader peace process. Given the recent years of conflict and pervasive fear that Charles Taylor would return to war if not elected, many Liberians made a calculated choice that they hoped would promote peace and stability. The new order provides an opportunity for rival groups to play their roles as opposition parties within a legal framework rather than as defeated factions without rights. An assessment on whether these elections served as the beginning of a democratic era must wait until future elections in which voters are given a choice among viable candidates rather than between war and peace.

The international community must do all it can to encourage all parties and the new government to work together to promote genuine reconciliation and inclusiveness and to heal the wounds of the past. For democracy to take root, Liberia needs to promote a more effective system of checks and balances among institutions and to safeguard human rights and public accountability. The Carter Center intends to remain engaged in Liberia to assist in these and other tasks. ■

Erik Oliver

The streets of Liberia's capital city, Monrovia, show scars from the country's 7-year civil war.

Background: From Civil War to Elections

Introduction

Liberia's unique political history is shaped by the quasi-colonial character of its relations with the United States and its settlement in the early 19th century by freed slaves from the southern United States. These former slaves and their descendants, known as Americo-Liberians, ruled Liberia at the expense of indigenous Africans in the interior for virtually all of its history until April 12, 1980, when a group of noncommissioned officers led by Master Sgt. Samuel Doe, seized power. Over time, Doe's regime increasingly relied on the military, dominated by his ethnic brethren, the Krahns. In 1985, an election was held in which the ballot count was marked by large-scale fraud. In the aftermath, a failed coup by Gen. Thomas Quiwonkpa led to massive reprisals against his popular base among the Gio and Mano peoples in Nimba County in northeast Liberia.

On Dec. 24, 1989, an armed incursion led by Charles Taylor, leader of the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), entered Liberia from Côte d'Ivoire with the goal of overthrowing Doe's ineffective authoritarian government. The ensuing civil war generated such violent brutality that the state collapsed, and social structures were distorted beyond recognition. One-tenth of the prewar population of 2.5 million died, one-third became refugees, and nearly all of the rest were displaced at one time or another. Armed factions, composed in part of child soldiers, and warfare, motivated in part by an interest in looting, resulted in a brutal, complex conflict that was extremely difficult to manage.

In response to the destabilizing threat that the conflict created, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), led by Nigeria, created the ECOWAS Cease-Fire Monitoring

Group (ECOMOG). This group intervened in August 1990 with military force to try to end the conflict. After nearly seven years of civil war and countless peace initiatives, the latest of 13 peace agreements was signed in Abuja, Nigeria, in August 1996. This accord reconstituted a transitional government and set new timetables for implementing disarmament, demobilization, and presidential and legislative elections.

The Special Elections held on July 19, 1997, represent the culmination of a long and difficult process of political transition in Liberia from civil war to constitutional order. They were held as the final stage of the Abuja peace process and hence should be judged in part against the goals of the Abuja Accords to end the civil war. Based on assessments made during several pre-election visits, The Carter Center was keenly aware that the success or failure of these elections would have to be judged in relation to their ability to manage conflict.

The Special Elections held on July 19, 1997, represent the culmination of a long and difficult process of political transition in Liberia from civil war to constitutional order.

Although The Carter Center has worked on Liberia since 1991, this report focuses narrowly on its involvement in the 1997 Special Elections, including the observations and findings of its pre-election assessment missions, its field staff based in Monrovia, and its election monitors who observed the final days of the campaign, voting, and counting process. This report also summarizes the project's parallel human rights component, including training of Liberian human rights groups and the Center's post-election assessment mission.

Liberia's Civil War and Regional Intervention

Liberia's civil war began in December 1989, when Charles Taylor's rebel NPFL force crossed into Liberia from Côte d'Ivoire and moved rapidly through areas hostile to the Doe regime. Taylor had an initial base in northeastern Nimba and Bong Counties among the Gio and Mano peoples who had suffered under Doe's Krahn-led regime. As the NPFL advanced, the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) unleashed more terror against the civilian population, pushing them closer to the NPFL. By July 1990, the NPFL reached Monrovia's outskirts and threatened to take the capital. With its back to the sea, the AFL stiffened resistance. Chaos in the capital, characterized by widespread looting and ethnic killings, convinced Liberia's neighbors, led by Nigeria, to form ECOMOG.

Taylor rejected ECOWAS' peace initiative, arguing that it favored President Doe. ECOMOG troops, dominated by the Nigerian contingent, landed in Monrovia's port on Aug. 24, 1990. Taylor's NPFL forces attacked the troops as they tried to move toward the city center the next day. On Aug. 30, ECOWAS sponsored talks in Banjul, the Gambia, and selected Amos Sawyer to head an Interim Government of National Unity (IGNU). Taylor did not participate in the talks or in the IGNU.

In early September, a breakaway faction of the NPFL, led by Prince Yormie Johnson, killed Doe in a dispute that broke out at a meeting arranged at ECOMOG headquarters. ECOMOG began a military campaign that successfully drove Taylor away from Monrovia. In November, a cease-fire signed in Bamako, Mali, created an uneasy peace, with Monrovia governed by IGNU and protected by ECOMOG and the rest of the country controlled by Taylor and what he called the National Patriotic Reconstruction Assembly Government (NPRAG), based in the town of Gbarnga, Bong County.

The ECOWAS Standing Mediation Committee held meetings in Lomé, Togo (February 1991),

and Yamoussoukro, Côte d'Ivoire (five meetings between June and October 1991). Each meeting called for a cease-fire, demobilization, and transitional period culminating in elections, but none was implemented. The Yammoussoukro agreements failed to include the newly emerged factions, such as the United Liberation Movement of Liberia for Democracy (ULIMO, established by Krahn and Mandingo and former AFL members, with the backing of the Sierra Leone government).

Taylor used the talks to gain breathing space to rearm and relaunch attacks designed to win control unilaterally. Ruling 95 percent of Liberia from his capital in Gbarnga, Taylor had established his own currency, banking system, and radio network and engaged in international trade in diamonds, gold, rubber, and timber. Revenues from this trade went to purchase weapons on the international arms market, which had been flooded with cheap weapons from Eastern Europe's recently dismantled armies.

Fighting between Taylor's forces and ULIMO derailed deployment of ECOMOG, and by August 1992, large-scale fighting between ULIMO and the NPFL set off a new round of displacement. Further attacks on ECOMOG troops demonstrated how the battlefield rather than the negotiating table controlled the conflict.

Ruling 95 percent of Liberia ..., Taylor had established his own currency, banking system, and radio network and engaged in international trade.

Convinced that the war's outcome would be determined by military force, Taylor launched Operation Octopus, a major offensive to seize Monrovia, in October 1992. The NPFL shelled Monrovia, nearly capturing the capital before ECOMOG forces fiercely counterattacked using heavy artillery and fighter-bombers in residential neighborhoods where NPFL forces were dug in. ECOMOG fought with AFL and ULIMO units in open alliance, eventually forcing Taylor back toward Gbarnga.

ECOMOG had denied Taylor victory but had difficulty imposing a long-term political solution. The United Nations added a new set of actors to this increasingly complicated mix by appointing a Special Representative to Liberia, Trevor Gordon-Somers, and establishing a small but symbolic U.N. Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) in September 1993. Taylor began to lose ground to the combined forces of ECOMOG and ULIMO. In addition, ECOMOG imposed economic sanctions and seized the port of Buchanan, denying Taylor access to markets for trading Liberian lumber, minerals, and rubber in exchange for guns and other materials.

U.N.-sponsored meetings in Geneva led to an agreement signed in Cotonou, Benin, in July 1993. This called for encampment of warring factions under the supervision of ECOMOG and UNOMIL and a five-member Council of State nominated by the NPFL, ULIMO, and Sawyer's interim government. Elections were to be scheduled after seven months of transitional rule. Implementation stalled, due in part to the arrival of another new faction, the Liberia Peace Council (LPC, drawn from Krahn elements in the AFL and ULIMO and led by George Boley), which challenged the NPFL in southeastern Liberia. After many squabbles and delays, the Liberian National Transitional Government (LNTG) was finally sworn in on March 7, 1994, under David Kpomakpor's leadership. ECOMOG was expanded and made less Nigerian-dominated by the addition of some 1,500 troops from Tanzania and Uganda, a step intended to reassure Taylor, who refused to disarm ECOMOG. Despite these new actors from outside the immediate region, deployment was slow and command and control ambiguous. Disarmament never gained momentum, and soon, the East African forces came under attack and withdrew. Elections scheduled for September 1994 had to be canceled.

In addition to many new factions forming, the ongoing rivalry between the Krahn and the Mandingo wings of ULIMO again erupted into

warfare in late 1993, causing the organization to split into two factions (ULIMO-K, led by Alhaji Kromah, and ULIMO-J by Gen. Roosevelt Johnson). In July 1994, tensions within the NPFL erupted as a dissident faction tried to take over the movement, and violence broke out around Gbarnga. Waves of fighting and displacement ensued while formation of the transitional government stalled. New negotiations (Akosombo, Ghana in September 1994 and Accra, Ghana in November 1994 and January 1995) resulted in a Transitional Council with seats for the faction leaders, including the new factions that had arisen since Cotonou.

Waves of fighting and displacement ensued while formation of the transitional government stalled.

The Abuja Accords: The Difficult Road to Peace

Decisions on the composition and membership of the new Council of State stood still until Taylor and Nigerian head of state Sani Abacha met in Abuja in June 1995. Under pressure from an increasingly impatient ECOWAS, the first Abuja Accord was signed on Sept. 1, 1995. This Accord created a new six-member Council of State that included top leaders of the ruling factions and three civilians. Afterward, Taylor entered Monrovia to join the new government.

This Accord also called for disarmament by January 1996 and for elections by August 1996 but, as in the past, neither the United Nations nor ECOMOG implemented programs as quickly as promised. Violations of the cease-fire and attacks on humanitarian relief continued despite the Accord. In December 1995, Roosevelt Johnson and his ULIMO-J attacked ECOMOG troops near Tubmanburg, causing nearly 100 casualties and capturing large amounts of military equipment. Many analysts have suggested that a dispute between Johnson and Nigerian peacekeepers over control of local diamond mines partly motivated th fighting. ECOMOG began operations to isolate Johnson and supported efforts by Taylor and Kromah to marginalize their rival.

Violence reached new heights when a round o intense urban fighting broke out in Monrovia in April 1996. Taylor and his ally of the moment, Alhaji Kromah (ULIMO-K), dismissed Roosevelt Johnson (ULIMO-J) from the interim government and assaulted his largely Krahn militia. Taylor underestimated the fighting capacity of Johnson's small but well-armed force (drawn from ULIMO-J, AFL, and LPC), who were holed up at the Barclay Training Center compound together with hostages. The battle "collapsed into a murderous farce,"[1] destroying not only the city but also the public's confidence that Liberia could hold an election anytime soon. The U.N. Humanitarian Assistance Coordination Office estimated that 50 percent of Monrovia's population left their homes for more secure areas.[2] ECOMOG seemed powerless or unwilling to contain the violence. Some have alleged that elements of ECOMOG cooperated wit the attack.

Child soldiers, who seemed emboldened by the thrill of shooting, undertook much of the fighting.

Throughout the April 1996 crisis, looting was widespread. Child soldiers, who seemed embolden by the thrill of shooting, undertook much of the fighting. According to the United Nations, "It can safely be stated that all humanitarian organizations, U.N. agencies, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), UNOMIL, and government offices, as we as shops and other commercial establishments, wer

systematically looted by fighters of all factions."[3] In response, nearly all international humanitarian workers evacuated the city.

Taylor's men targeted attacks toward many of the nascent institutions of civil society as well as the international community. The Justice and Peace Commission (JPC) of the National Catholic Secretariat suffered particularly hard, losing every document, all its equipment, and its only vehicle.[4] According to Amos Sawyer, "The big three warlords ... have decided they are going to crush whatever civilian opposition they can. Whatever they had not succeeded in bullying out of existence or shutting down through rigged courts they have just crushed."[5]

The major Liberian factional leaders—Charles Taylor, Alhaji Kromah, George Boley, and Roosevelt Johnson—attended and signed a revised Abuja agreement, Abuja II.

In May, West African leaders organized a round of talks in Accra, Ghana, in an effort to end the fighting and restore the transitional government. The meeting established a new cease-fire and returned Johnson to his cabinet position. Following the Organization of African Unity (OAU) summit in Yaounde, at which a resolution calling for sanctions and a war crimes tribunal against factional leaders was endorsed, ECOWAS increased pressure on militia leaders.

West African foreign ministers from ECOWAS' Committee of Nine, mandated to manage the intervention, gathered for more talks in Abuja, Nigeria, in August 1996. Nigerian Gen. Sani Abacha, the new ECOWAS chair who replaced President Jerry Rawlings of Ghana, led the talks. The major Liberian factional leaders—Charles Taylor, Alhaji Kromah, George Boley, and Roosevelt Johnson—attended and signed a revised Abuja agreement, Abuja II. This accord constituted a factionally based Council of State to serve as the interim government for a short transition period, with disarmament beginning in September 1996 and elections in May 1997. One Western diplomat said, "Sani Abacha wants to get out of Liberia. To do that, he has to find a workable end-game strategy, which will have to involve elections."[6] Following the Abuja meetings, a cease-fire was declared on Aug. 20, 1996, and Ruth Perry replaced Wilton Sankawulo as head of state.

Abuja II: Implementing a Peace Plan

To implement Abuja II's critical disarmament and demobilization phases, ECOMOG increased its forces and demonstrated new leadership under Nigerian Maj. Gen. Victor Malu.

Although disarmament began slowly in November 1996, it gained momentum toward the end of January 1997. The deadline for handing in weapons was extended for 10 days until Feb. 9. ECOMOG collected large quantities of weapons, and, for the first time in years, guns were not visible on the streets except in peacekeepers' hands. While demobilization enjoyed relative success in collecting, it had less success in breaking factions' command and control over fighters. Due to scarce resources and poor planning, the demobilization exercise was reduced to a 12-hour process. Ex-combatants simply turned in their weapons, were registered, and were left to go on their own.

As called for in both Abuja Accords, faction leaders resigned from the Council of State, and several transformed their militias into political parties. Taylor transformed his NPFL into a political party, the National Patriotic Party (NPP). Similarly, Kromah turned his ULIMO-K into the All Liberian Coalition Party (ALCOP). George Boley became the standard-bearer for former President Doe's former party, the National Democratic Party of Liberia (NDPL).

In addition, several traditional political parties

began reorganizing. In January 1997, some came together in an Alliance of Political Parties, promising to provide Liberian voters a clear alternative to former factional leaders. The Alliance held a contentious convention that nominated Cletus Wortorson of the Liberian Action Party (LAP) as its presidential candidate. However, allegations of vote buying led several prominent politicians, including Togba-Nah Tipoteh (Liberian People's Party—LPP) and Baccus Matthews (United People's Party—UPP), to withdraw. The Unity Party (UP) also left the Alliance, nominating Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf as its candidate. Johnson-Sirleaf was formerly a leader of the LAP and later an official with the U.N. Development Program in New York. As strains within the Alliance deepened, many prominent individuals defected to Johnson-Sirleaf and the UP.

All told, 13 political parties qualified for the ballot (see Appendix B). Taylor's NPP had an advantage; it could build on organizational structures developed and financial and capital resources seized during the war. As the major civilian leaders began to gravitate toward Johnson-Sirleaf, she appeared to be the leading contender to challenge Taylor. The other parties were identified either regionally or ethnically (the ALCOP never fully overcame its image as a Mandingo party and NDPL had a strong Krahn constituency) or were small civilian parties with only limited capacity to campaign in the countryside. ■

Carter Center Pre-election Assessments and Training Workshops

Background to The Carter Center's Liberia Election Project

The Carter Center's involvement in Liberia dates to March 1991, when all sides in the country's civil war invited former U.S. President Jimmy Carter to assist in the peace process and preparations for eventual elections. President Carter first visited the country in 1978 during his administration and has maintained an interest ever since.

After several months of exploratory contacts in 1991, the Center was publicly invited to play a role in the peace process and elections. The request came in a communiqué issued in June 1991 at the end of what became known as the Yamoussoukro I summit, attended by Charles Taylor, Amos Sawyer, and ECOWAS heads of state. The communiqué asked the Center to "begin the elections process in Liberia" and "cooperate with the Committee of Five (alternatively called the ECOWAS Mediation Committee) who will scrupulously oversee the cease-fire." This invitation was echoed in subsequent ECOWAS meetings and made more explicit in the Yamoussoukro II and III communiqués and other agreements.

By 1994, President Carter and Carter Center staff had made several trips to the region, meeting with leaders of the interim governments, faction leaders, and members of civil society, and communicating with officials throughout West Africa. To bolster its various activities in support of peace and democratization, the Center established an office in Monrovia in 1992. This remained open until full-scale fighting broke out in April 1996, forcing its closing and evacuation of its director.

In addition to President Carter's high-level involvement, the Center's Monrovia office supported many programs between 1992-96, including the Liberian Network for Peace and Development (LNPD) and the Liberian Initiative for Peacebuilding and Conflict Resolution (LIPCORE). The LNPD was formed in 1993 as a consortium of Liberian NGOs and civic groups working to promote community development and helping the population overcome the war's ravages. LIPCORE emerged from a series of meetings organized by The Carter Center in 1994 and 1995. It sought to foster peacebuilding dialogues by bringing together prominent Liberians associated with faction leaders, the military, and others and by providing fora for open exchange of viewpoints and concerns. Also, the Center's Atlanta-based staff organized the Mickey Leland Fellowship Program, which brought people associated with various Liberian NGOs to Atlanta for capacity-building and training, including working with several Atlanta civic organizations.

When full-scale fighting broke out in Liberia in April 1996, the Center closed its Monrovia office and temporarily suspended field projects. However, after the signing of Abuja II in August 1996, the Center renewed efforts to reinforce the peace process and began plans for a project to support the upcoming elections. The Liberia Project was conceived as a comprehensive observation mission to:

1) Support and reinforce Liberian groups working to institutionalize the electoral process.

2) Deter fraud, prevent violence, and encourage acceptance of clean election results or peaceful challenges of disputed elections through legal means.

3) Encourage a civility pact, or code of conduct, for political parties and campaigns.

4) Encourage national dialogue to facilitate the transition.

5) Promote and protect human rights throughout the electoral process.

To support of these objectives, the Center sent three pre-election assessment missions (in March, April, and June 1997) as well as a large international observer delegation. It opened another field office in April 1997 to support the missions and prepare for the elections. In May, the Center's Monrovia office staff coordinated a workshop for the Liberian Independent Elections Commission (IECOM) on new election laws and codes of conduct. Following a special April human rights assessment mission, it also organized a training workshop in June for Liberian human rights NGOs.

The [Carter] Center sent three pre-election assessment missions ... as well as a large international observer delegation. It opened another field office in April 1997 to support the missions and prepare for the elections.

In July, the Center sent a 40-person delegation to monitor the elections and assess the process. Afterward, it coordinated a democratic consolidation mission to explore possible areas of future assistance as well as a mission to help Liberian human rights NGOs identify priority areas of focus and concern in the post-election environment. Each activity will be described in sections that follow.

Prior to these efforts, The Carter Center, in collaboration with The World Bank, organized a workshop in Atlanta on Feb. 19-21, 1997, on the war-to-peace transition in Liberia and Guatemala. The workshop, which included government officials; opposition leaders; heads of civil society; representatives from the United Nations, ECOWAS, the donor community, and regional and international NGOs; and others, focused on four topics:

1) Peace negotiations and demilitarization.

2) Social and economic reintegration of vulnerable groups.

3) Conflict transformation.

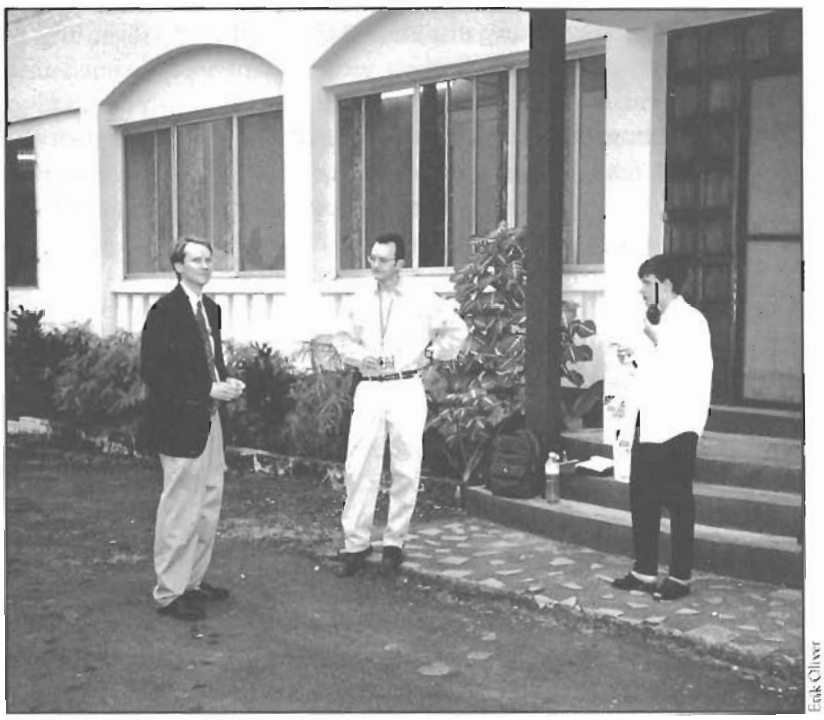
4) Restoring social capital and strengthening civil society.

The conference helped articulate concerns of Liberian civil society about delays in disarmament and issues related to the election process. Providing a forum in which to present their views, participants expressed caution about the upcoming elections, stressing they were not an end in themselves, and they could lead to renewed violence and loss of faith in the democratic process if they failed. Participants agreed that confidence-building measures were necessary, including steps on restoration of economic processes, demobilization, good governance, human rights, democratic institutions, and the empowerment of civil society and women.

March 4-8 Pre-election Assessment Mission: Defining a Role

The Carter Center's first mission to Liberia, from March 4-8, 1997, assessed preparations for the presidential and legislative elections, then scheduled for May 30, and explored how the Center could best support a credible electoral process that could form the basis for an enduring peace. Delegation members included Gordon Streeb, the Center's acting associate executive director and director of the Liberia Project; Terrence Lyons, election advisor and research associate at the Brookings Institution in Washington, D.C.; and Susan Palmer, assistant director for projects of the Center's Conflict Resolution Program.

The team met with potential presidential candidates; representatives of political parties; nominated members of IECOM, which was still in



Erik Oliver

Terrence Lyons (left), Carter Center senior project advisor and Monrovia office director, stands outside St. Teresa's Convent in Monrovia with Rob Black, assistant project advisor, and Kendall Dwyer, logistics coordinator.

formation; members of the ruling Council of State; and others to discuss preparations for national elections. All welcomed President Carter's interest in fielding an international delegation to observe their elections.

Based on information collected from a wide range of organizations and institutions during its five-day visit, the Carter Center delegation concluded that Liberia required the immediate and intensive engagement of the international community to consolidate the dual transition to peace and democracy. The team also decided that the Center should remain engaged and should reopen its Monrovia office to contribute to the transition and prepare for an election-monitoring delegation.

The team noted that several areas related to conflict resolution and the minimum requirements for credible elections needed more work. First, regarding conflict resolution, it recognized the critical importance of demobilization, defined as the breaking of command and control over fighters to reduce opportunities for a return to war. Team members called on the international community to vigorously support comprehensive programs for demobilization and careful monitoring.

Second, delegates noted the importance of a post-election power-sharing pact, stating that "political institutions created by elections following a period of conflict have a particular burden to be as inclusive as possible so that no group will feel it lacks a stake in the new order." The Center pledged to pursue opportunities to promote discussion toward such an agreement.

Third, the Center recommended provisions to marginalize the threat posed by "spoilers" who might refuse to accept election results and return to war. It urged neighboring states to cut economic links that allowed warring factions to obtain arms and other resources. It also encouraged the international community to implement effective sanctions on firms and individuals who benefited from and sustained such links and on any party that refused to accept election results and took up arms.

Regarding conflict management, delegates identified several issues that needed attention for elections to be credible. Foremost among these was the concern raised by a range of Liberian political leaders about the lack of a level playing field, particularly in terms of access to the countryside and media. Mission members recommended that parties work on an electoral code of conduct including rules to cover campaigning and provide for unimpeded access to all areas of the country.

Another major issue was the need to establish

effective, neutral institutions to administer the elections and adjudicate any disputes. At the time of the March mission, the lack of an independent elections commission severely constrained the process, and many Liberian actors expressed concern about the feasibility of meeting the scheduled election date, May 30. The Center's report said, "Sufficient time is necessary to build public consensus among key constituencies such as political parties and civic organizations behind the decisions regarding the electoral system the Commission must adopt." Despite these concerns, the Carter Center team chose not to recommend a delay, deciding instead that the Liberian elections commission should select the election date.

The next month, the Center reopened its Monrovia office, with Terrence Lyons as senior project advisor/Monrovia office director. Also, IECOM was inducted, and parties began selecting candidates and planning campaign strategies.

April 17-21 Pre-election Assessment Mission and Aftermath

The Carter Center conducted a second assessment mission from April 17-21, 1997. Ambassador Streeb led the delegation, which included Andries Odendaal, senior researcher for the Centre for Conflict Resolution in South Africa, and Sara Tindall, project coordinator of The Carter Center's Conflict Resolution Program. Delegates joined Dr. Lyons and Rob Black, assistant project advisor of the Center's Monrovia office.

The mission met with a wide range of Liberian actors and issued a report that noted that IECOM had made progress but expressed concern about the lack of voter education and about delays in the Liberian government's financial support for the elections commission. The report also noted the lack of transparency and consultation in the development of the so-called Special Elections Package, which was to include the laws and code of conduct governing the electoral process. Specifically, the Center's report found that "important decisions regarding party lists, ballot design, and deadlines seemed to be made without an adequate period of public education and deliberation" and called for systematic discussions among political parties, civic organizations, and the commission regarding regulations to implement the election law and code.

[The Carter Center] expressed concern about the lack of voter education and about delays in the Liberian government's financial support for the elections commission.

The mission remained concerned about continued constraints on political parties' access to the countryside and media and had fears related to security. A lack of discussion on governance issues held particular significance. According to the report "There was no indication that planning was moving forward on what sort of government would be constituted by the elections, how long the government would sit, what sort of internal security arrangements the country would need, and the like." The mission raised the issue of post-election governance with party leaders, but some, most notably Charles Taylor, resisted the idea and suggested that efforts to negotiate power-sharing were designed to recreate the ineffective interim governments of the past.

Based on these concerns, the April delegation explicitly recommend that the election be postponed. The report called for "creation of a transparent electoral process developed independently by IECOM, in consultation with relevant Liberian and international actors, with sufficient time to build an inclusive process and thereby complete the challenging tasks necessary for a credible election. Such a process will inevitably require a delay in holding elections beyond May 30."

April-May 1997: Slow Progress and Postponement

Immediately after the Center's April mission, IECOM showed indications that it could not meet the May 30 deadline. A critical problem slowing the process was the Council of State's inability or unwillingness to provide funds for IECOM to cover staff salaries. IECOM's funding became further complicated by rivalry and misunderstandings between ECOWAS and the international donor community, which was providing technical and financial support for the elections. On April 23, 1997, IECOM Chair G. Henry Andrews announced a suspension of deadlines for party conventions, party lists, and the start of the 30-day campaign period. Shortly after, on April 24-27, ECOWAS Special Envoy Chief Tom Ikimi visited Liberia to meet with political parties and IECOM to assess the situation and status of electoral preparations.

IECOM's slow progress in completing the Special Elections Package made it difficult for international donors to provide assistance and particularly technical advice to IECOM. Because IECOM would not provide electoral consultants from the International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES) or the European community with the draft Special Elections Package, designing training materials or registration forms was impossible.

In light of problems and remaining hurdles, an increasing number of Liberian leaders spoke out on the need for credible elections, and many urged a postponement.

In light of problems and remaining hurdles, an increasing number of Liberian leaders spoke out on the need for credible elections, and many urged a postponement. An Inter-Party Working Group of 11 registered political parties (not including the NPP) signed a statement on May 1 listing preconditions for elections including:

1) Disarmament and demobilization.
2) Repatriation and resettlement.
3) Access to the countryside.
4) An independent elections commission.
5) A level playing field.

The Group's statement concluded with a request "that the date for the holding of election[s] be rescheduled bearing in mind the need to satisfy the conditions stated herein before the elections are held; such a new date for elections shall however not be before the second Tuesday of October 1997."[7] Charles Taylor's NPP and ECOWAS, however, continued to pressure for adherance to the May 30 deadline stipulated in the Abuja Accords.

The lack of transparency regarding deliberations created a context in which rumors of favoritism toward one or another candidate flourished.

As the planned election date drew closer, it became clear that it would be difficult, if not impossible, to meet the schedule. Thus, officials held a flurry of meetings and consultations to hammer out final details of the Special Elections Package and to set a new election date. The process was murky and characterized by Liberian officials flying off to Abuja for consultations and ECOWAS leaders, such as Ikimi, holding meetings in Monrovia. The lack of transparency regarding deliberations created a context in which rumors of favoritism toward one or another candidate flourished. In particular, many Liberians believed Nigeria supported Charles Taylor and the United States backed Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf. Nigeria seemed to fear that the West was trying to "steal" credit for the election and control the elec-

toral process. Newspaper stories alleged that several U.S. organizations, including IFES and The Carter Center, were linked to the Johnson-Sirleaf campaign.

ECOWAS invited party leaders to Abuja for a final consultation on the Special Elections Package on May 21, 1997. The parties, despite their earlier public demand for a postponement until October, agreed to accept a decision to postpone the election until July 19. IECOM told the parties that it could complete registration, provide a copy of the special law for review, and conduct voters' education in this time frame and with the reduced budget approved for the elections.

The parties, despite their earlier public demand for a postponement until October, agreed to accept a decision to postpone the election until July 19.

The parties further urged IECOM to adopt a single ballot (with a single vote cast for the president and his/her party's slate of legislative candidates), which they argued was more appropriate for proportional representation. They also called for counting at the polling sites rather than at a centralized counting center, as envisioned in the draft Package. The parties had only a short time to review the Package, and some stated later that they did not fully understand all implications of the Abuja agreements. The July 19 date left only 56 days for preparations, a very small number given the state of planning and logistical challenges facing IECOM. Most observers believed that the abbreviated timetable favored the NPP, the party with the best organization and most resources.

Workshops and Training: IECOM Elections Workshop and Human Rights Training for NGOs

May 29-31 IECOM Workshop on the Special Elections Package

Following the May summit and change in election day, a broad framework for the July 1 elections was established. However, many concerns and deficiencies remained, and The Carter Center undertook several initiatives to try to ameliorate some of them. Two problems in particular were:

1) The need for consultations between IECOM and the parties.

2) The need for a stronger, more effective human rights community in the context of the transition.

The Carter Center anticipated the first need at the outset of its Liberia Project, as it was linked to the Center's efforts to help institutionalize the electoral process and encourage agreement among parties on a code of conduct for responsible campaigning. The Center discussed the code of conduct with IECOM and the parties during both its March and April missions, and Monrovia-based staff pursued the issue through May. Although the Special Elections Package completed in May did include a formal Code of Conduct, it was developed with little consultation and therefore provided few opportunities for The Carter Center to influence its content.

At IECOM's request, however, the Center did play a critical role in coordinating a workshop on the Package (including both the Special Elections Law and the Special Elections Code of Conduct). This workshop, which took place at IECOM headquarters on May 29-31, sought to:

1) Present and understand the Special Elections Package and address stakeholders' concerns.

2) Foster a cordial relationship between the parties and IECOM by promoting the airing of relevant issues and concerns.

3) Understand the Code of Conduct for Observers, including information regarding the roles and responsibilities of election observers and party agents (see Appendix C).

IFES provided funding for the workshop, and Carter Center staff coordinated with IECOM and IECOM Commissioner Gloria Scott to develop and implement the resulting program. Representatives of IECOM and all 16 registered political parties as well as domestic observers attended. The workshop enabled IECOM to disseminate and explain the Special Elections Package to media, political parties, and observer groups. Perhaps even more important, an IECOM Inter-Party Advisory Committee (IIPAC) was formed to bring together all political parties with IECOM to resolve issues and communicate information regarding the electoral process. IIPAC held its first meeting the week after the workshop and continued to operate throughout the election process.

IIPAC served as a forum for parties and IECOM to exchange information, but lack of time prevented it from becoming an effective mechanism for consensus building. Mainly, IIPAC was a channel through which IECOM could provide information to parties, which, because of their underdeveloped state, had limited ability to vigorously engage with IECOM.

June 18-25 Human Rights Training for Liberian NGOs

One focus of The Carter Center's Liberia Project was to strengthen the promotion and protection of human rights throughout the electoral process. Hence, the Center conducted an intensive training program for the Liberian human rights community at the St. Teresa's Convent in Monrovia on June 18-25, 1997. Sixty participants representing 12 human rights NGOs attended. Helena Nygren Krug, human rights consultant to The Carter Center, coordinated and facilitated the training, which included sessions conducted by Chris Mburu of the International Human Rights Law Group, Dodie McDow of the Fund for Peace in New York, a representative of the International Committee of the Red Cross, and two UNOMIL human rights officers. Several from Liberia's human rights community also

The Carter Center

Juanita Jarrett of the Association of Female Lawyers, a Liberian nongovernmental organization, speaks on gender-specific violations at The Carter Center's Human Rights Training Program in June 1997. Carter Center Human Rights Consultant Helena Nygren Krug sits at the table behind Ms. Jarrett.

made presentations, including Archbishop Michael K. Francis, Kofi Woods of the JPC, Juanita Jarrett of Liberia's Association of Female Lawyers, and Benedict Sannoh of the Center for Law and Human Rights Education (CLHRE).

The agenda was tailored to meet groups' individual needs as determined through an assessment mission by Mr. Mburu and Ms. Nygren Krug in April 1997. It was divided into three sections (see Appendix D).

The first section, on human rights and democracy, included presentations on the roles of a constitution, elections, and civil society in a democracy, as well as problems of democracy in Africa. Human rights issues during elections were considered, specifically election-related rights such as freedom of assembly and association, freedom of expression, freedom of information, and the independence of the judiciary. Presentations also addressed issues specific to the upcoming elections, including voter education and proportional representation versus a single constituency system.

The second section focused on fact finding and documenting, reporting, and disseminating human rights. It covered concepts and techniques regarding principles that underlie human rights NGOs' operations, such as impartiality, neutrality, and independence. Participants learned how to verify facts, assess rights violated (e.g., vis-à-vis Liberia's legal obligations), distinguish human rights violations from acts of criminality, collect information, and approach moral issues and cultural and/or local sensibilities (e.g., concerning refugees, minors, and women).

This second portion also outlined human rights enforcement mechanisms at international, regional, and local levels. It detailed the U.N. human rights system and the mechanisms and procedures available under it, including how to file a case, provide information, lobby the United Nations, and link up with international NGOs. Specifically, participants discussed the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child and the status of the draft optional protocol on limiting age for recruitment to armed forces, which is directly applicable to Liberia's problem of child soldiers. Trainers presented the African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights as an example of regional enforcement.

[Several] NGOs joined the domestic monitoring effort organized by the Liberian Election Observation Network.

The final part of the training, on the post-election period and institution building, addressed human rights and the media, judiciary, police, and military. Participants discussed human rights NGOs' role and how they could coordinate, network, raise funds, and obtain U.N. consultative status. The session highlighted the meaning of crimes against humanity and war crimes, the role of truth commissions and war crimes tribunals, and the status of the proposed establishment of a permanent International Criminal Court. It ended with a debate about the relationship of peace and justice.

Each participant received a briefing book containing international and regional human rights instruments applicable to Liberia, a training manual for fact finding, contact information for the U.N. human rights system and international NGOs, guidelines on human rights reporting, and other materials.

Several of these human rights NGOs had recently formed a coalition called the Center for Human Rights with a view to coordinating their activities during the election. In the run-up to the elections, however, the group split over organizational rivalries and what role to play in the elections. Thus, the JPC, headed by Kofi Woods, together with several other NGOs joined the domestic monitoring effort organized by the Liberian Election Observation Network (LEON). The CLHRE, led by Counselor Benedict Sannoh, chose to observe the elections independently, claiming all domestic observers were American-supported and partisan.

Political party billboards promoting the ALCOP (led by Alhaji Kromah) and the NPP (led by Charles Taylor) sit at the crossing of Gbarnga and Voinjama roads.

June 26-28 Pre-election Assessment Mission: Campaign and Registration

As agreed during the Abuja Summit in May, the campaign period officially began on June 16, 1997. Although several violent incidents occurred, candidates continued to campaign, and several held rallies in different parts of the country. Voter education was limited and further constrained because media were dominated by partisan leaders, most importantly Charles Taylor, who controlled the only radio station that could reach all of Liberia. These factors raised serious concerns among Liberians and foreign observers: could and would voters receive sufficient neutral information to make informed choices?

Registration was scheduled to begin on June 24 and last until July 3. However, because of logistical difficulties and poor planning, it started slowly. The rainy season's onset made large areas of the southeast inaccessible by road, including almost all of Grand Kru, Maryland, Sinoe, Rivercess, and Grand Gedeh Counties, and large parts of upper and lower Lofa County.

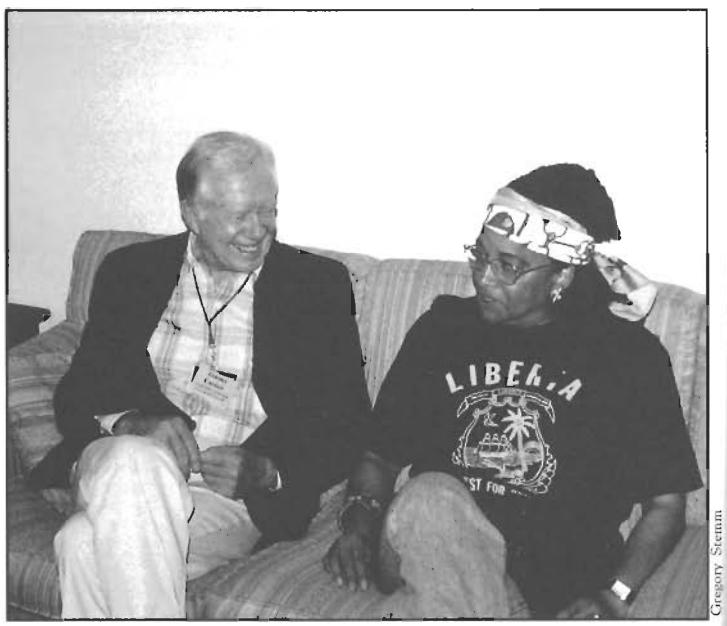
In early June, The Carter Center deployed two medium-term observers, Chip Carter, the Carters' son, and Sara Tindall of the Center's Conflict Resolution Program, to assess the campaign process and assist in preparations for the July election observation mission. Mr. Carter and Ms. Tindall traveled throughout Liberia, reporting on the campaign, the status of registration and other electoral preparations, the presence of UNOMIL and other international observers, and logistical issues concerning road conditions and polling site accessibility.

The Center sent its final pre-election mission to Liberia on June 26-28, which included President Carter, Ambassador Streeb, and Dr. Lyons. This delegation held a series of meetings with IECOM officials, ECOMOG commanding Gen. Malu, the U.S. and Nigerian ambassadors, Nigerian Foreign Minister Ikimi, Archbishop Michael Francis, political party representatives, and officials from the United Nations, the European Union (EU), IFES, civic organizations, and others. Together, they focused on:

1) Voter registration.
2) Political party campaigning.
3) IECOM election management problems.

Voter Registration

On June 28, the delegation observed registra-



Gregory Stemm

Jimmy Carter meets with Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, presidential candidate of the Unity Party, prior to the July 19 Special Elections.

tion in Montserrado, Bomi, and Grand Cape Mount Counties and visited numerous registration sites between Monrovia and Sinje (50 miles to the northwest), including several displaced-persons camps. The team noted that ECOMOG forces were in charge of maintaining security and seemed to be trusted by all election officials, political parties, and citizens. Despite transportation problems and adverse weather conditions, ECOMOG, UNOMIL, the EU, and IECOM cooperated to deliver registration materials to an estimated 1,564 registration sites throughout the country.

Because of the unavoidable staggered delivery of materials, however, the team found that many sites began registration several days late. At most sites, people waited patiently in line. Registration officials meticulously followed written procedures, which included recording basic information of each registrant, painting indelible ink on registrants' thumbs, and issuing laminated registration cards.

Only one negative incident was reported; an ECOMOG soldier had to remove an individual who was encouraging people to vote for a particular party. Some alleged that registration cards were being bought and sold, but the scale and consequences of such activities remained unclear.

The team expressed concern about the absence of observers during the registration process. In general, the only observers present at sites the team visited were ECOMOG soldiers, who were assigned to provide order. Because of the compressed timetable, registration went forth with few voters having identification. The procedures therefore only allowed for people to give their personal data to registration officials. Registrants could be challenged once the lists were published, or observers could challenge them at registration sites. The absence of party or other local observers opened the possibility for noncitizens or underage individuals to register.

Since registration began slowly in many locations, officials considered extending it in some places. This made scrutiny of the registration process and lists even more difficult for parties and others to organize. Parties attributed their absence to IECOM's late announcement of procedures for obtaining credentials, including a $2 fee, which parties said they could not pay. IECOM subsequently abolished the fee, but by the time procedures were set and badges issued, registration was well under way.

Because of decisions ECOWAS made in February 1997, no provisions were made for refugees to vote in neighboring countries. This meant that some 600,000 Liberian refugees would be disenfranchised. There were reports of refugees temporarily crossing over to register. ECOMOG recorded that some 123,000 refugees returned in the previous three months, but it was not clear whether these resettlements were permanent.

Campaign Activities

Presidential candidates and party officials with whom the team met fell into three categories:

1) Those with an extensive network of party offices throughout the country (the NPP).
2) Those working frantically to establish such a network and attempting to campaign in all 13 counties (the UP and the UPP).
3) Those focusing on particular campaign incidents, suggesting they had already concluded the process was not fair (the Alliance, the NDPL, and the ALCOP).

The June assessment team heard reports of several problems during the campaign, including an incident that occurred on the first day. The UP and the NPP campaigned in the same area, and NPP partisans attacked the UP convoy. ECOMOG soldiers moved in quickly, arresting and jailing the two instigators. Other violent incidents marred two other parties' events in Nimba County but did not halt the campaigning.

Members of the Alliance of Political Parties complained that a report of a plot to assassinate Charles Taylor led to unjustified arrests of Alliance supporters. The party contended that the report had deliberately been designed to disrupt its campaign. ECOMOG told The Carter Center's assessment team the threat was real and one individual had been arrested.

Parties continued complaining to team members about the lack of a level playing field, arguing they could not match the resources and short-wave radio capacity of the NPP and Charles Taylor. Unfortunately, repeated promises by the EU and the United States earlier in the year to enhance the capacity of two local radio stations, (assuring alternative FM and short-wave access throughout the country) still had not materialized. President Carter made several contacts to facilitate shipment of transmitters. In the end, the transmitters arrived in Liberia shortly before the election. Thus, they played only a small role in increasing access to the media during the campaign period.

Despite these complications, several party leaders felt the campaign process had a healing effect on the country. Those actively campaigning re-established a presence in areas that in recent years had seen only members of armed factions. Some sense of normalcy returned, and a message of hope resonated, particularly in displaced-persons camps, where registrants said they simply wanted to install an elected government so they could go home.

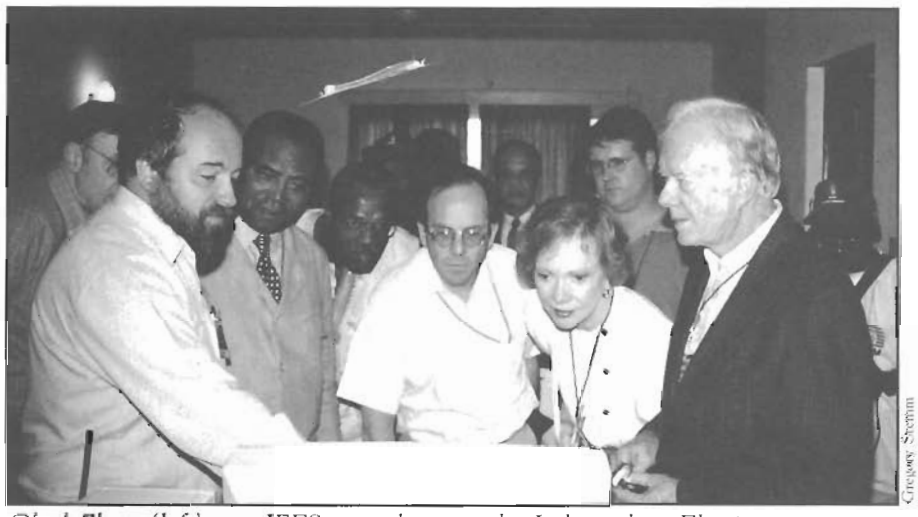
The Elections Commission

The Carter Center team reported the potentially serious problem of an apparent shortfall of donor commitments to IECOM to cover the full cost of registration and voting. The Elections Commission raised three specific concerns:

1) Renovation of office space for the 17 magistrates in the 13 counties had not started, making it difficult to begin field operations.
2) Communications equipment and supporting generators had not been installed, making it impossible for IECOM to call field offices.
3) No agreement had been reached on the amount and method of payment for registration personnel, who were threatening to walk off the job.

Disagreements over which organization(s) had committed to which payments not only impacted the working relationship among IECOM, the EU, and IFES but also took on a political dimension. ECOWAS expressed concern that such disputes were part of a deliberate plan to undermine its efforts to conduct elections on schedule. The EU and IFES rejected these assertions, but the atmosphere remained charged. President Carter arranged for a meeting between the EU and IECOM Chair Andrews, at which they agreed that U.N. and EU auditors would work at IECOM offices to expedite voucher payment and that the EU would take over direct payment of salaries to most registration personnel. Upon this agreement, the United States, the EU, and ECOWAS arranged to ensure full funding.

Voter education presented another problem. Although IECOM's civic education unit was responsible for educating voters, it had done little more



Ched Flego (left), an IFES consultant to the Independent Elections Commission (IECOM), explains IECOM's computer system for tracking election results to Carter Center delegates (from right) Jimmy Carter, Rosalynn Carter, Robert Pastor, Coffi Randolph, and Nicephore Soglo.

than put up posters. However, "Talking Drum Studios," with support from the NGO Search for Common Ground, conducted useful voter education programs, including street and radio skits.

The Carter Center team concluded that despite some obstacles, preparations seemed to exist for an adequate but far-from-perfect election. It also said such an election probably was the only alternative to continuing violence. At the visit's end, President Carter held a press conference to make the following points:

1) While registration had gotten off to a shaky start and contained some weaknesses, there still was time for eligible voters to register.

2) Voters should understand their ballot would be cast in secret, so they should ignore any propaganda to the contrary and vote their consciences.

3) The fact that any one party had more resources than others was not unprecedented and should not be presumed to give that party an insurmountable advantage.

4) Parties should respect each others' right to campaign anywhere without fear of intimidation.

Other Pre-election Observations and Activities

Mid-Term Observers and the Registration Process

Following the June assessment mission, the Center deployed Shelley McConnell, politica science professor at Bard College, and Jason Carter, the Carters' grandson, as medium-term observers to continue monitoring the registration process and exhibition process of confirming registration that immediately followed. Between Ju 4-16, 1997, they visited 61 polling stations in six counties.

Dr. McConnell and Mr. Carter noted several minor problems regarding registration, including insufficient materials to register all interested vote in some areas, particularly Lofa County. A poten tially more serious problem was the lack of paym for registration workers. A few registrars threaten to go on strike if not paid before election day.

Carter Center observers gather after the July 19 elections. From left are Geoffrey Onegi-Obel, Marie Angélique Savané, Vivian Lowery Derrick, Nicephore Soglo, Coffi Randolph, Jeanne Simon, and Paul Simon.

While training of registrars had reportedly been hurried, the Center's observers said the workers seemed to understand the process, and the rate of spoiled cards was remarkably low. They also were encouraged about the security conditions for registration, reporting that ECOMOG troops were present at each site visited. Registrars characterized ECOMOG soldiers as cooperative and faithfully performing their role in guarding sealed registration materials at night. The only security-related incident reported involved the stoning of a group of Mandingo refugees returning from Guinea to Nimba County. ECOMOG arrested those responsible and restored order.

Dr. McConnell and Mr. Carter noted that UNOMIL observers were deployed across the country and had visited most registration sites. The vast majority of registrars told them that IECOM officials occasionally, sometimes regularly, visited their sites. More often, a coordinator or the county magistrate visited the sites. All but one reported visits by UNOMIL observers, and a few reported visits by EU observers.

However, very few party agents were present for registration. Only the NPP was sufficiently organized and well-financed to mount a serious observation of the registration period that stretched from June 24-July 9 (after a three-day extension in some areas). Other parties were either disorganized or completely unknown. Most of the party agents present (generally the NPP) reported satisfaction with the registration process, and very few prospective voters reported being challenged by party agents. Those who were rejected were usually disqualified for being underage. (Applicants' ages were verified by asking their years of birth or other questions concerning historic events with well-known dates).

While exact figures were unavailable, it was clear that a relatively large number of Liberians had registered to vote, including significant numbers of recently returned refugees. (Participation in the so-called "exhibition period," during which voters confirmed registration, however, was much lower). Despite these high figures, it should be noted that some voters were disenfranchised either because registration rolls were full or because the registration period ended before they could register. It is impossible to know how many people were affected, but some speculated that Lofa and Nimba Counties suffered the most from disenfranchisement; large numbers of refugees crossed the Guinea border to register there, leading to an unanticipated demand for registration, which IECOM could not meet.

Overall, the medium-term observers' reports upheld President Carter's earlier positive assessment of the registration process. At the same time, they signaled in advance some minor problems that would complicate but not derail the July 19 elections.

Gordon Streeb (right), Nicephore Soglo, Rosalynn Carter, and Jimmy Carter meet with the Liberian Independent Elections Commission, chaired by Henry Andrews (at head of table).

Other Observations and Carter Center Activities

The Monrovia-based Carter Center staff participated in numerous workshops and meetings with other civic and international organizations. Rob Black participated in UNOMIL briefings for their medium-term observers and discussed conflict resolution in the context of elections. Terrence Lyons spoke at an election law workshop, which was held at the Liberian Supreme Court and was sponsored by the U.S. Department of Justice. He also briefed the election observer delegation sent by Friends of Liberia, a group composed largely of former Peace Corps volunteers, upon their arrival in Monrovia.

Black and Lyons also met and advised the Liberian domestic observer group, LEON. In coordination with the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI), which organized training programs for LEON, Center staff assisted LEON in developing their election-deployment plan and submitting it to IECOM. This enabled IECOM to create a plan for transporting domestic observers, including those from LEON, before and after the election, which significantly improved domestic observers' coverage of polling sites.

The IECOM Logistics Working Group, composed of representatives of ECOMOG, IECOM, the EU, IFES, and UNOMIL, played an important role in the elections. IFES staff and consultants helped draft election-training manuals and other materials. They also bolstered the Group's capacity to manage the deployment of election materials and the process of receiving ballot boxes and post-election results. Carter Center staff coordinated their activities with this Group and the other international observer groups by participating in weekly meetings with UNOMIL, the EU, Friends of Liberia, and ECOWAS to address common issues relating to logistics, communications, security, and information sharing.

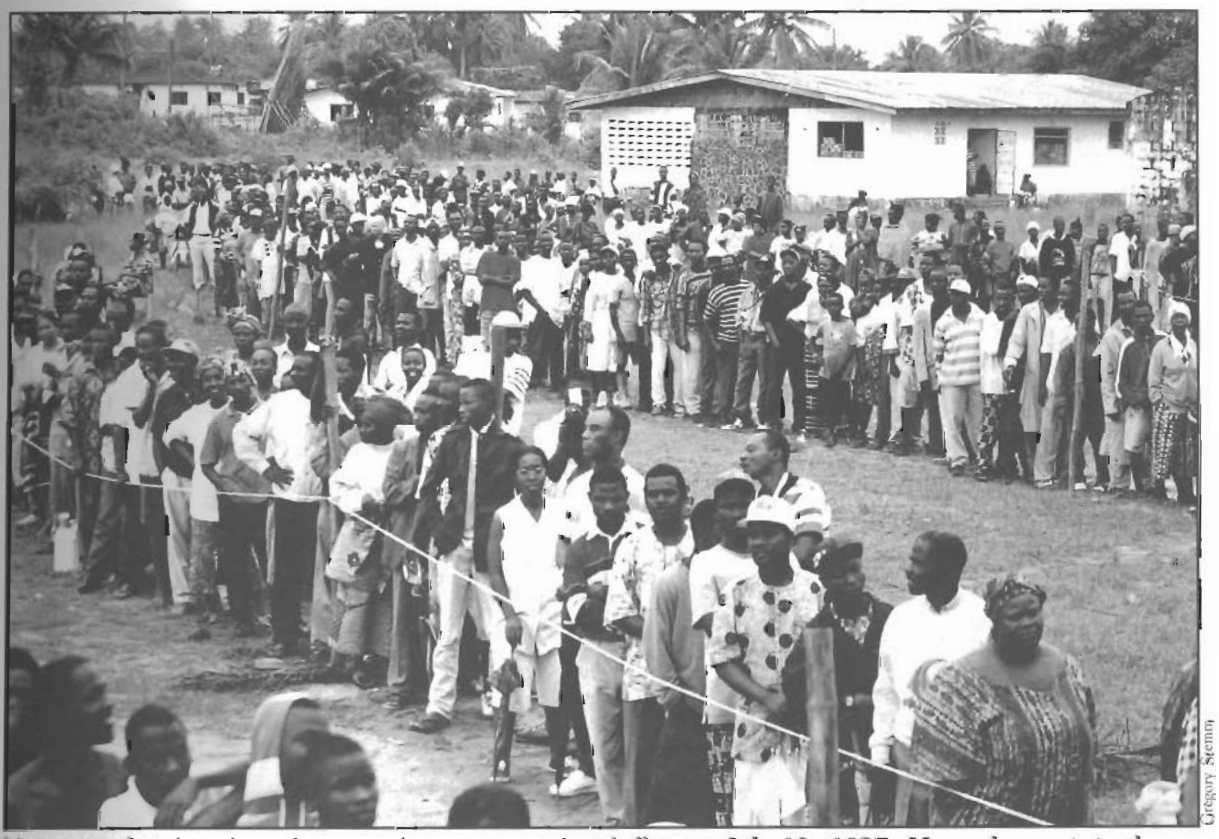
The Center's Monrovia staff made a series of trips to the countryside to establish contacts with UNOMIL field stations, assess conditions, and prepare for deploying the Center's observation delegation to Bomi, Bong, Grand Bassa, Grand Cape Mount, Grand Gedeh, Grand Kru, Margibi, Montserrado, Nimba, and Sinoe Counties. ■

Carter Center Election Observation and Follow-up

July 19 Election Observation Mission

The Delegation

For the July 19, 1997, elections, The Carter Center organized a 40-member international team to observe the elections. President Carter co-led the delegation with Nicephore Soglo, former president of Benin, and Paul Simon, former U.S. senator (see International Observer Mission list, page 4). The mission's principal purposes were to support and reinforce the electoral process, deter fraud, prevent violence, and encourage acceptance of clean results or peaceful challenges of disputed elections through legal means. As stated in its press release, The Carter Center was "neutral with regard to outcome but partial to the democratic process." In this role, The Carter Center and other international observers hoped they would "help to ensure that the Liberian people can freely express their choice in a secret ballot."



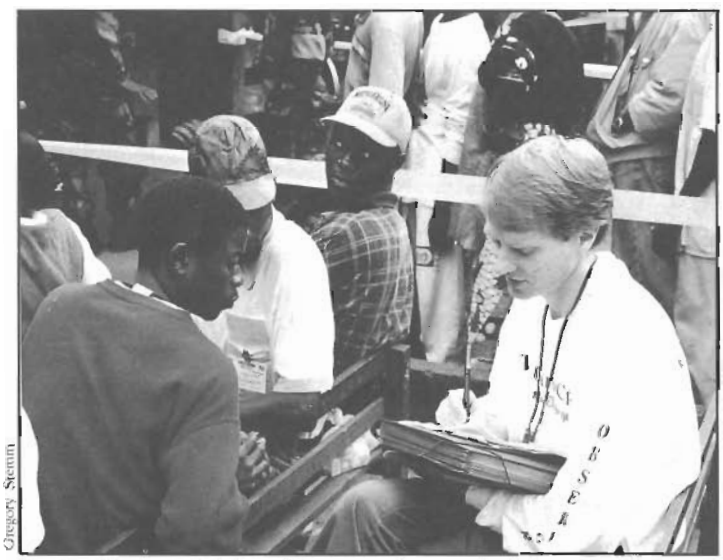
Gregory Stemm

Voters stood in long lines for many hours to cast their ballots on July 19, 1997. Here, they wait in the morning at a polling site in Monrovia.

Carter Center observers deployed outside Monrovia faced bad roads and difficult conditions, such as this log bridge near Zorzor in Lofa County.

Prior to deployment, Center staff conducted extensive briefings sessions for delegates. Most arrived in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, on July 13, traveling together to Liberia on July 14. Ambassador Streeb and Dr. Lyons presented a briefing on July 14 in Adibjan before flying to Monrovia. In Liberia, the delegation had full days of briefings on July 15 and 16 at St. Teresa's Convent, including reports from UNOMIL, IFES, IECOM, ECOMOG, the U.S. Embassy, other observer groups, and the major political parties. Briefings addressed logistics, security, and communications.

Based on its assessment missions and current reports from the its Monrovia office and the other major international organizations involved, The Carter Center issued a statement on July 18, the d before the election. "We have concluded that, despite important problems in the electoral proces this country is poised to undertake a historic deci sion," the statement concluded. At a press confer ence that same day, President Carter joined Amba sador A.H.J.M. Speekenbrink, leader of the EU delegation, and Ambassador Paul Rupia, leader of the OAU delegation, in urging voters to make the most of their secret ballots. President Carter said, "We also hop that this election permits all Liberians to tu a new leaf and to begin working together wi each other in a new spirit of respect and tolerance. We look forward to seeing all of you at the polling stations tomorrow."

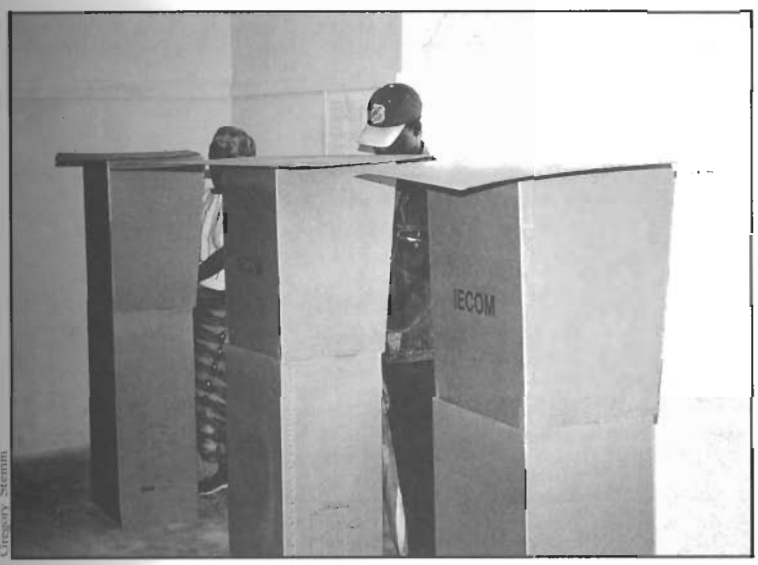


Gregory Stemm

Senior Project Advisor Terrence Lyons (right) discusses the electoral process with Liberian political party agents at a Monrovia polling site.

Deployment and Observation Methodolog

In the months preceding the elections, The Carter Center and the other international observer organizations, including the EU and the United Nations, made plans to share data about their observations on election day and the days following. In general, the groups cooperated well. This was true both of logistics planning, which improved markedly after the IECOM Logistics Worki



Liberians mark their ballots in voting booths, constructed out of cardboard boxes.

Group's formation, and of coordinating press statements and delivering consistent messages to Liberia's public and political actors.

Logistical constraints and the need for security shaped all international observer groups' deployment plans. As noted above, several counties in the southeast were accessible only by helicopter. Consequently, deployment to these areas had to rely on the EU or UNOMIL for transportation, including the Center's teams deployed to Zwedru (Grand Gedeh County) and Greenville (Sinoe County), which traveled in EU helicopters and observed in EU vehicles. The rest of the Center's teams were deployed in vehicles to Voinjama, Zorzor, Sanniquelle/Ganta, Buchanan, Sinje, Tubmanburg, Kakata, and Montserrado Counties. Where possible in the field, delegates communicated with the Monrovia office via high-frequency radios, often with the help of the EU's and UNOMIL's communications networks.

In total, Carter Center delegates observed the process in 10 of Liberia's 13 counties (see Appendix E). Depending on each region's location and accessibility, they were deployed one to two days before election day. This allowed observers to spend at least one day in their areas prior to the elections and to meet with local officials, party representatives, U.N. election observers, and other observer groups. On election day, July 19, they watched polling sites open, visited many sites over the course of the day, and observed counts at preassigned sites.

Carter Center observers gathered both quantitative and qualitative data. Robert Pastor, director of The Carter Center's Latin American and Carib-

Jimmy Carter greets Major Gen. Victor Malu, commander of the Nigeria-based ECOMOG forces in Liberia.

Nicephore Soglo (center in background) and Jimmy Carter (right in background) observe procedures for opening a Monrovia polling site.

bean Program (LACP), coordinated these efforts. Observers filled out a survey "checklist" at each polling site visited, as well as a special "closing-and-counting form" at sites where they observed the closing process (see Appendix G). The forms helped measure the process overall and allowed the team to assess whether problems were isolated or formed a pattern of irregularity. The Center's 40 delegates observed the voting process at approximately 10 percent of polling sites.

The delegation planned to conduct a parallel vote tabulation, or "quick count," to have an independent data source on election results and facilitate a possible role in calming fears or mediating disputes that could arise immediately after the election. However, in light of logistical constraints, the international observer organizations faced serious obstacles in designing and implementing a good quick count. Just prior to the election, some uncertainty existed as to whether any of the observer groups would conduct a parallel vote count whose results would be available to the Carter Center delegation. Given this doubt and the importance of having independent, timely data on election results, especially if President Carter and other delegation leaders had to mediate any disputes, the Center decided to collect its own data for a quick count. Thus, Carter Center observers gathered results from a sample of polling sites and reported them to the Center's Monrovia office.

Richard Wike, a statistical analyst with

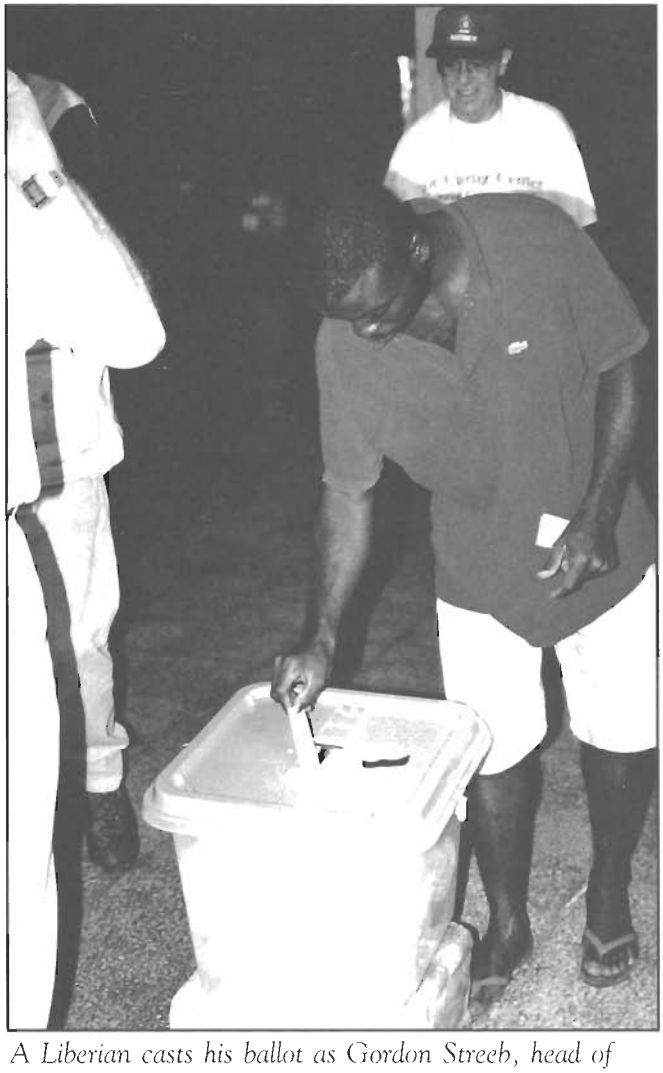
Former First Lady Rosalynn Carter talks with voters waiting to cast their ballots at a polling site in Monrovia.

Beth Shapiro and Associates, and David Carroll, associate director of The Carter Center's LACP, worked with Dr. Pastor to design the sample for the Center's quick count. The Center's team exchanged information with EU and U.N. representatives to avoid duplicating observer deployment. The United Nations had stationed personnel throughout the country to conduct its own count and thus could provide the Center with detailed information about polling site accessibility. The logistical challenge of reaching many of the remote polling sites forced the Center to modify its sample, thereby decreasing the quick count's reliability. The Center cooperated with the EU delegation to a limited extent in gathering data for the quick count but failed to reach an agreement with Friends of Liberia and Femmes-Africa-Solidarité.

Despite logistical and communication difficulties, the Center's quick count provided an important check on official results and aided President Carter in his post-election meetings with party leaders.

In total, the Center's quick count sampled 50 polling sites, including a small number of data sites contributed by cooperating organizations. Of the 50, roughly half were substitutes but were used because they were more accessible than the polling sites drawn in the original sample. In all cases, the substitutes were from areas that Liberia experts described as having similar demographic traits to those in the original sample.

Quick-count results were completed by early morning on July 20 and indicated the following vote distribution:



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A Liberian casts his ballot as Gordon Streeb, head of The Carter Center's Liberia Project, looks on.

Political party agents and local observers watch as poll workers display and count ballots.

Candidate/Party	Percentage
Taylor/NPP	76
Johnson-Sirleaf/UP	9
Kromah/ALCOP	9

The other 10 parties shared the remaining 10 percent. Official results, which were reported only gradually over the next several days, were:

Candidate/Party	Percentage
Taylor/NPP	75.3
Johnson Sirleaf/UP	9.6
Wotorson/Alliance	2.6
Matthews/UPP	2.5

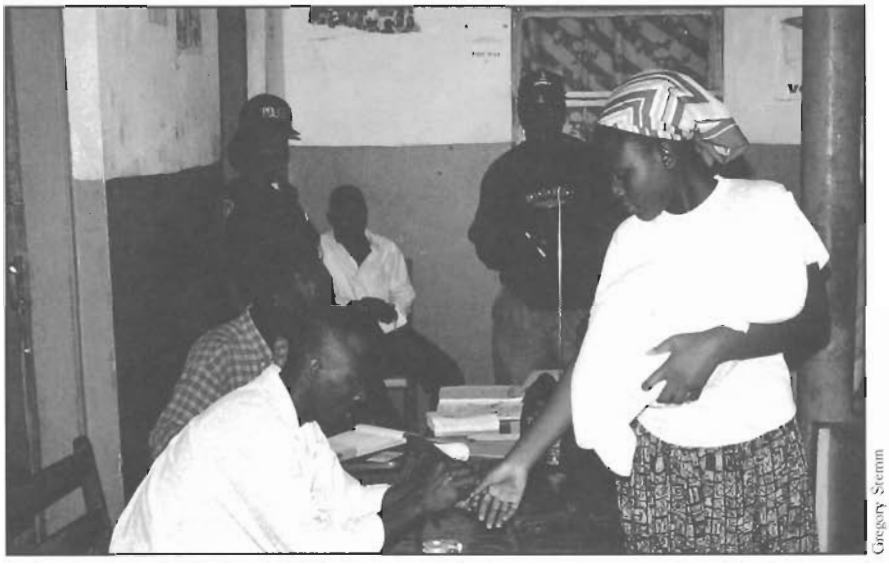
The other eight parties all received less than 2 percent of the vote (see Appendix I for final official results).

Preliminary Assessment and Post-election Observations

Preliminary Assessment

On Sunday, July 20, Carter Center delegates returned to Monrovia for a debriefing and meeting with the leadership team. On Monday morning, the delegation reviewed the preliminary assessment developed from these reports. That afternoon, President Carter, Sen. Simon, Ambassador Speekenbrink, and Ambassador Rupia gave a final press conference. All concluded that the elections were credible and congratulated IECOM, ECOWAS, and the Liberian people for making them a success.

President Carter urged IECOM to release results as they became available rather than wait until they were final before making an official announcement. The IECOM chair first stated provisional results on July 20. As the Center's quick count data began to come in and after IECOM


Gregory Stemm

Registrars applied indelible ink to voters' thumbs for identification. Here, a poll worker applies blue ink to a Liberian woman's finger as she registers to vote.

announced partial results several times, it became clear that Charles Taylor and the NPP would win an overwhelming majority of votes. IECOM's early returns from Montserrado County showed Taylor comfortably in the lead, even before his strongholds in Bong and Nimba Counties were counted.

The next day, President Carter and other Center delegates met with the major candidates to appeal for each to accept the results. Taylor suggested that he would be magnanimous by reaching out to the opposition while committing his government to respect human rights. UP presidential candidate Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf stated that she and her party would "acquiesce" the results and file a formal complaint through established procedures. Sirleaf emphasized the need to form a "strong and constructive" opposition. George Boley and Alhaji Kromah, the presidential candidates of the NDPL and ALCOP respectively, at first also rejected the election results, claiming wide-scale fraud. Other civilian parties conceded defeat.

The Carter Center's preliminary statement (see Appendix H) said, "In the face of tremendous challenges, the Liberian people have conducted a peaceful and orderly election, and turned out in very high numbers to vote, and the collection and reporting of returns should lead to an accurate count." The delegation was impressed by the high participation rate, the successful deployment of materials and staff despite the compressed time frame, and ECOMOG's vital role in providing security and in keeping the process orderly. The statement applauded the large number of domestic observers and party agents present at polling sites on election day.

The Center further noted that its observers visited more than 200 polling stations in 10 of Liberia's 13 counties. Also, in 98 percent of the stations observed, its delegates reported that the voting process "functioned normally" and/or with only "some minor irregularities."

The statement did recognize some problems with the registration list, which was not fully completed by election day; uneven access to media and resources needed to campaign; voter education; rules for determining valid ballots; and overly complicated processes for collecting, counting, and reporting results. While commending ECOMOG's role in providing security and logistical assistance, the Center said that "some ECOMOG troops were involved in the conduct of the elections. In the future, it is important that the military's exclusive role should be to provide security, leaving the conduct of the elections to civilian election administrators." However, it stressed that these problems were not sufficiently serious to have altered the people's opportunity to select their leaders and that

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Jimmy Carter and Paul Simon meet with Liberia's President-elect Charles Taylor.

the election "represents a very important step forward for Liberia."

The statement concluded, "This election could provide a turning point for Liberia—between a bitter civil war and a hopeful future of prosperity and democracy. The positive future, however, will only come if all parties in Liberia demonstrate their commitment to the peaceful process of democracy-building, allay fears that some have of others, and rejuvenate a feeling of nationhood and civic pride that will help their country advance. We hope that the spirit of election day will guide Liberians in the days ahead."

Post-election Observations

Over the next several days, Carter Center observers were posted at Robertsfield International Airport to observe the receiving and compiling of tally sheets. Carter Center delegates also observed the process in the IECOM counting room, where results were entered into the computer data base. In the early morning of July 24, two Center observers and one other international observer watched the final ballot boxes without tally sheets be counted at Robertsfield. These observers worked closely with IFES, the EU, and UNOMIL and reported that despite logistical and other problems, the counting process appeared to accurately record votes cast.

That same day, Carter Center representatives attended the program for the declaration of the presidential winner and on July 27, the official certifications of the president, vice president, senators, and representatives. Chip Carter, Jason Carter, and the Center's Monrovia office staff attended Charles Taylor's inauguration on Aug. 2.

According to official results, Taylor won the presidency with over 75 percent of the vote, followed by Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf with 9.6 percent. In the Senate, the NPP won 21 seats, the UP three, and the ALCOP two. In the House of Representatives, the NPP won 49 seats, the UP won seven, the ALCOP three, the Alliance two, the UPP two, and the LPP one. Due to controversy over assignment of constituencies for the seats, the ALCOP and LPP initially refused to name their members of the legislature. Later, they did name their representatives.

Gregory Stemm

Nicephore Soglo, Jimmy Carter, EU delegation leader A.H.J.M. Speekenbrink, and OAS delegation leader Paul Rupia speak at a pre-election press conference on July 18, 1997.

Post-election Missions: Human Rights and Democratic Consolidation

Human Rights Assessment Mission, Aug. 5-8, 1997

As part of the Center's efforts to assess the new challenges of promoting human rights and democratic consolidation in the post-election environment, Helena Nygren Krug led a mission to Liberia in early August. This mission sought to identify priorities for effective promotion and protection of human rights in light of the elections. Mission members held meetings with officials of the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Information, Liberian Bar Association, U.S. embassy, U.S. Agency for International Development, human rights community, and other key civil society groups.

The CLHRE reiterated its conclusion that the elections were free, fair, and transparent. However, the JPC maintained serious reservations about the process. That group and many of the political parties had called several times for a postponement, and even though the parties eventually agreed to go forward with the process, civil society had not been included in the decision. Overall, the JPC felt the elections were neither fair nor transparent. It said they were not truly democratic, as choices were tampered with, either because of lack of adequate civic and voter education or direct interference by ECOMOG and election officers.

The human rights community and others expressed concern over the post-election environment, fearing that the departure of the international community's shield would gradually give way to repression and human rights abuses. They were disappointed about President Taylor's initial appointments, which they felt did not live up to his promise of creating an inclusive government. They were concerned about his vow to get tough on security and crime, execute armed robbers and highjackers, and strengthen traditional tribal communities. They also were concerned about statements by Minister of Information Joe Mulbah, who indicated a restrictive approach to freedom of the press.

One particularly important issue concerned President Taylor's plans to create a human rights commission to investigate human rights abuses and a reconciliation commission to strengthen the cultural fabric of society and heal past wounds. Although

pleased by President Taylor's stated aims to create these groups, many human rights NGOs argued it was important for the human rights commission to have a retrospective mandate to investigate abuses during the war. The Ministry of Justice, however, argued this would be illegal in light of provisions in the peace accords.

The Center consulted with human rights NGOs, identifying the following as priority concerns in light of the elections:

1) Ensuring that civic and human rights education could reach rural areas.

2) Ensuring that the human rights commission proposed by President Taylor was independent and able to function effectively, free of interference, and with a strong mandate to investigate alleged abuses and bring claims against the government.

3) Strengthening the judiciary through training, resources, and guarantee of tenure.

4) Ensuring that the newly established juvenile court starts functioning.

5) Reforming prisons, particularly maximum-security facilities where torture was alleged to be rampant.

Post-election Assessment Mission, Sept. 4-8, 1997

In early September, the Center organized its final assessment mission, led by Ambassador Streeb and including Dr. Carroll and Dr. Lyons. The mission intended to survey the overall political situation, including early indications of the new government's direction and to explore areas of possible Carter Center assistance to the Liberian government and civil society in the wake of the elections. The team met with various government ministers (including Agriculture, Education, Information, Planning, and Rural Development); a senior presidential advisor; the Supreme Court chief justice; several political party leaders; representatives of human rights NGOs and the United Nations, the EU, and U.S. embassy; and others.

The team concluded that several areas looked promising for Carter Center projects. These included possible assistance in agricultural extension, preparing a national economic development strategy, judicial training, human rights education, training for journalists and media technology, and assistance and training for the planned human rights commission.

At the same time, the team noted a few early warning signs. Specifically causing concern were President Taylor's first promotions inside the police force and his apparent rush to pass legislation for the human rights commission without thorough consultation with the Liberian human rights community. Although Liberia remained quiet in September, the team recognized that sustainable conflict management would require building on the July 19 elections to create a government regarded by a broad range of Liberians as representative and responsive to their needs.

Given the role President Carter and The Carter Center have played over the last six years in promoting peace and facilitating elections in Liberia, the Center is uniquely positioned to help the country confront challenges it will face in the future. ■

Conclusion

Final Reflections on Liberia's July 19, 1997, Special Elections

The July 19 Special Elections represented an impressive demonstration of Liberians' desire for peace. Large numbers turned out to register, stood patiently in long lines to vote, and waited calmly for IECOM to announce official results. Relatively minor problems during the campaign and registration processes and on election day did not alter the overall results.

For elections to be fully meaningful, however, they must give voters a significant choice. In Liberia's Special Elections, a number of voters told observers that they understood their choice as between Charles Taylor and war, clearly an unenviable range of options. Given the country's recent history of conflict and the pervasive fear that Taylor would return to war if not elected, many Liberians made a calculated selection that they hoped would more likely promote peace and stability. One Liberian said, "He [Taylor] killed my father, but I'll vote for him. He started all this, and he's going to fix it."[8] While a significant number of voters identified with Taylor and his populist message and patronage, many seemed cautious, war-weary, and determined to use their vote to appease the powerful former factional leader.

The Special Elections ratified and institutionalized the political topography created by seven years of war. Taylor's NPFL dominated much of the country from 1990. After the elections, his NPP controlled the government. The means by which his power gained legitimacy, however, is important. Taylor won greater international, regional, and local acceptance for his government through elections, not through a unilateral military victory, nor a negotiated agreement among factional elites and regional powers. To win, he converted his military organization into an effective mass-mobilizing political party, replacing guns with patronage and roadblocks with rallies. The speed of this conversion and the ineffective demobilization process, however, leaves doubt about the democratic character of Taylor's organizational base.

The compressed timetable also had an effect on the Special Elections. Although the pressures that led to the short time frame were understandable, they contributed to the opposition's relatively ineffective efforts to mobilize support. They also limited the effectiveness of the parties' and IECOM's voter education campaigns.

The electoral process allowed Liberians to play their role as voters, not as powerless victims within a military-occupied zone. Hence, the people won greater standing to assert their right as citizens directly responsible for legitimizing Taylor's power.

The July 19 Special Elections represented an impressive demonstration of Liberians' desire for peace.

The new order provides an opportunity for rival groups to play their role as opposition parties within a legal framework rather than as defeated factions without rights. The elections and return to constitutional rule also places legal limits around the new regime's power. However, the extent to which the new administration will follow constitutional constraints and pay attention to voters who brought them to power remains open. Liberia's constitution concentrates power in the office of the presidency and gives the new government a six-year term in office before it must formally face voters again.

While an election following a period of conflict may simply reflect the realities of military power on the ground, the voting process at least allows people

to participate in the selection of their leaders. Taylor could not be defeated, but he also could not rule with broad political authority until voting took place and the people had an opportunity to have a voice.

In many ways, the elections resembled a referendum on peace, with Taylor perceived by many as the candidate most capable of preventing a return to war. A new government dominated by a single party will however raise concerns among Liberians that the conflict ended not in a broad-based government of reconciliation but with an exclusive victory for a warring party. It is too early to judge the Taylor administration, but warnings from comparative post-conflict cases and from Taylor's past behavior suggest that constitutional constraints on power and voters' ability to hold their leaders accountable are often not sufficient.

If these elections usher in an era of stability, the Abuja peace process will have succeeded in establishing a formula to end Liberia's civil war. Assessment of whether the process served as the beginning of a democratic period must wait until future elections.

It will be critically important for the international community to do all it can to encourage all parties and the new government to work together to promote genuine reconciliation and inclusiveness and to heal wounds of the past. Although the 1997 elections were not perfect, they do represent a very important step forward for Liberia in the peace process. For democracy to truly take root, Liberia needs to promote more effective systems of checks and balances among institutions, the safeguarding of human rights, and public accountability. Also, future elections must be held in a context where voters can exercise their choice in an environment of greater security. The Carter Center intends to remain engaged in Liberia to assist in these and other tasks. ■

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[6] French, Howard W. "In Liberia, Life Returns to a Grim Normality." *The New York Times*, Aug. 21, 1996, A8.

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[8] Chiahemen, John. "Liberians Vote in Peace Against War." *Reuters*, July 19, 1997. Many Western journalists noted similar language. Another voter was quoted as saying, "Charles Taylor spoiled this country, so he's the best man to fix it." McNeil Jr., Donald G. "Under Scrutiny, Postwar Liberia Goes to Polls." *The New York Times*, July 20, 1997. Yet another reportedly said, "He killed my mother, and he killed my father, and I don't care—I love Charles Ghankay Taylor." McNeil Jr., Donald G. "Early Returns in Liberia Put Rebel Leader Far Ahead." *The New York Times*, July 21, 1997.

Appendices

A. List of Abbreviations

B. Registration Figures and List of Political Parties and Standard Bearers

C. IECOM Electoral Workshop Agenda: May 29-31, 1997

D. Carter Center Human Rights Training Agenda: June 18-25, 1997

E. Carter Center Deployment Plan: July 19, 1997

F. Map of Liberia

G. Carter Center Election Day "Checklist" and "Closing and Counting Form"

H. Carter Center Liberian Special Elections Preliminary Statement: July 21, 1997

I. Presidential Vote Results

J. Ballot Paper for Presidential Candidates

K. Selected News Articles

Appendix A

List of Abbreviations

AFL	Armed Forces of Liberia
ALCOP	All Liberian Coalition Party
CLHRE	Center for Law and Human Rights Education
ECOMOG	ECOWAS Cease-Fire Monitoring Group
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EU	European Union
IECOM	Independent Elections Commission
IFES	International Foundation for Election Systems
IGNU	Interim Government of National Unity
IIPAC	IECOM Inter-Party Advisory Committee
JPC	Justice and Peace Commission
LAP	Liberian Action Party
LEON	Liberian Election Observation Network
LIPCORE	Liberian Initiative for Peacebuilding and Conflict Resolution
LNDP	Liberian Network for Peace and Development
LNTG	Liberian National Transitional Government
LPC	Liberia Peace Council
LPP	Liberian People's Party
NDI	National Democratic Institute for International Affairs
NDPL	National Democratic Party of Liberia
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
NPFL	National Patriotic Front of Liberia
NPP	National Patriotic Party
NPRAG	National Patriotic Reconstruction Assembly Government
OAU	Organization of African Unity
ULIMO	United Liberation Movement of Liberia for Democracy
UNOMIL	United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia
U.N.	United Nations
UPP	United People's Party
UP	Unity Party
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development

Appendix B

Registration Figures

County Name	Total Voters
Grand Cape Mount	21,372
Bomi	15,015
Rivercess	8,219
Montserrado	279,964
Sinoe	14,770
Grand Kru	10,097
Maryland	17,082
Grand Bassa	51,729
Grand Gedeh	15,463
Lofa	69,399
Bong	109,457
Nimba	101,789
Margibi	37,074
Total	**751,430**

Source: IECOM

List of Political Parties and Standard Bearers

(in order as on ballot)

Progressive People's Party	Chea Cheapoo
National Reformation Party	Martin M.N. Sheriff
Free Democratic Party	Fayah J. Sahr Gbollie
Liberian National Union	Dr. Harry Fumba Moniba
Unity Party	Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf
All Liberian Coalition Party	Alhaji Garxim Varmuyan Kromah
National Patriotic Party	Charles Ghankay Taylor
Alliance of Political Parties	Cletus-Segbe Wortoson
Reformation Alliance Party	Henry Boima Fahnbulleh
People's Democratic Party of Liberia	George Toe Washington
United People's Party	Gabriel Baccus Matthews
National Democratic Party of Liberia	George E. Saigbe Boley Sr.
Liberian People's Party	Togba-Nah Tipoteh

Appendix C

IECOM Electoral Workshop Agenda:

May 29-31, 1997

Objectives:

1) To present and understand the Electoral Package (Special Election Laws and Code of Conduct) and address stakeholders' relevant issues.

2) To foster a cordial relationship between the political parties and IECOM through a mechanism that promotes the airing of relevant issues and concerns.

3) To understand the Code of Conduct for Observers and the roles and responsibilities of election observers and party agents.

Agenda

May 29

Participants: IECOM, political party leaders, observers/monitors, donors, journalists, scholars

9 a.m.	Welcome/introduction of workshop purpose; J. Tiah Negbe, IECOM
9:10 a.m.	Keynote address; G. Henry Andrews, Chair, IECOM
9:40 a.m.	Workshop roles and rules; Carol Jeffrey, Facilitation Team
9:50 a.m.	Presentation of Special Elections Laws; Gloria Scott, IECOM
11:15 a.m.	Small-group brainstorming: issues needing further clarification in Electoral Package; Carol Jeffrey; Facilitation Team
1:30 p.m.	Presentation of Code of Conduct for Political Parties and Code of Conduct for Observers; Isaac Sagay, IECOM
2:15 p.m.	Presentation of observers' role; Carlos Valenzuela, UNOMIL
3:15 p.m.	Response to the issues by IECOM; IECOM Panel
4:30 p.m.	Closing remarks; G. Henry Andrews, Chair, IECOM

May 30

Participants: IECOM, political party leaders

9 a.m.	Welcome
9:15 a.m.	IECOM responses to electoral law issues; G. Henry Andrews, Chair, IECOM, and Gloria Scott, IECOM
1:30 p.m.	Presentation and discussion of relationship building between election commissions and political parties; Tony Edoh, ECOWAS, and K. Afari-Gyan, U.N. Development Program
3 p.m.	IECOM/Political Parties Forum development, including its purpose, structure, membership, agenda, schedule, rules; Gloria Scott, IECOM, and Carol Jeffrey, Facilitation Team
4:45 p.m.	Closing remarks; G. Henry Andrews, Chair, IECOM

May 31

Participants: IECOM, observers/monitors, political party leaders

9 a.m.	Welcome
9:15 a.m.	Code of Conduct for Political Parties; Gloria Scott, IECOM
11 a.m.	Review of Code of Conduct for Observers; C. Clinton-Johnson, Counselor of Law, IECOM
1:30 p.m.	Presentation and discussion of party agents' role, rights, responsibilities, and procedures; Celestine Bassey and Tony Iredia, ECOWAS observers
3 p.m.	Response by IECOM; G. Henry Andrews, Chair, IECOM, and Gloria Scott, IECOM
4:30 p.m.	Closing remarks; G. Henry Andrews, Chair, IECOM

Appendix D

Carter Center Human Rights Training Agenda:

June 18-25, 1997

St. Teresa's Convent, Monrovia, Liberia

HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY

June 18

Conceptual framework to give participants a broad conceptual understanding and comprehensive background focusing on human rights in the context of democracy and elections

1) Social contract theory of state
2) Human rights as a pivotal element of democracy; international human rights movement; introduction to international, regional, and national human rights instruments
3) Role of the constitution
4) Role of elections in a democracy
5) Role of civil society in a democracy
6) Problems of democracy in Africa

June 19

Human rights issues during elections

1) Freedom of assembly and association
2) Freedom of expression
3) Freedom of information
4) Independence of the judiciary
5) Rights most commonly assailed during elections
6) Derogable and nonderogable rights
7) Experience of the 1985 Liberian elections; the Rev. Father Robert G. Tiktor
8) Experience from other places in Africa (Gabon, Tanzania, Kenya, South Africa)
9) Exercise and discussion

June 20

Issues specific to the Liberian Special Elections, July 19, 1997

1) Voter education and role of civil society; E.C.B. Jones and Carlos Valenzuela, UNOMIL
2) New and unfamiliar concepts peculiar to Liberia's Special Elections, proportional representation, and centralized counting/single constituency; Terrence Lyons, The Carter Center
3) Discussion on how to most effectively convey meaning of concepts, including secrecy of the ballot, to Liberians

FACT FINDING, DOCUMENTING, REPORTING, AND DISSEMINATING

June 20

Basic concepts and techniques

1) Impartiality, neutrality, independence as underlying principles of human rights nongovernmental organizations' (NGOs) operations
2) Verification of facts: primary and secondary sources
3) Assessing rights violated; Liberia's obligations at national, regional, and international levels
4) Human rights violations vs. acts of criminality
5) Formal/informal and legal/illegal methods of collecting information

June 21

6) Cultural and local sensibilities; dealing with vulnerable groups (refugees and returnees, internally displaced persons, unaccompanied minors, women as single heads of households)
7) Women and gender-specific violations; Juanita Garrett, Association of Female Lawyers in Liberia
8) Field investigations: techniques, lessons learned in field; Pascal Soto, UNOMIL human rights officer
9) Witness interviewing; Maurice Nyberg, UNOMIL human rights officer

Local, regional, and international human rights enforcement mechanisms; putting Liberia on the international human rights agenda

1) U.N. special rapporteurs (SRs) and the Commission on Human Rights: how to file a case with a SR, how to provide information, how to lobby the United Nations, how to link up with international organizations
2) U.N. treaty bodies such as the Committee on the Rights of the Child: how it operates, requirement of exhaustion of local remedies, role of NGO coordinator; NGO coalition as means to link up with the work; draft optional protocol on limiting age for recruitment to armed forces, as applies to problem of child soldiers in Liberia

June 23

1) African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights: rules of procedure, how it operates and functions, and role of human rights NGOs; Benedict Sannoh, Center for Law and Human Rights Education
2) Local remedies: those available in the Liberian courts; Wrefueh Sayeh, Counselor of Law
3) Exercise and discussion on case studies and how to file claims in international, regional, and local systems

POST-ELECTION/INSTITUTION BUILDING

June 23

4) Human rights and the media; Dodie McDow, Fund for Peace
5) Discussion on salient areas in need of reform and projects needed in: a) the judiciary, Kofi Woods, Justice and Peace; b) the police and military; Brownie Samukai; c) human rights education and the media; Dodie McDow, Fund for Peace

June 24

Coordinating, networking, collaborating

1) Strength of collaborating and remaining diverse within the coalition: dealing with governments and determining mandates; the Liberia Human Rights Center; Desmond Parker, UNOMIL
2) Experiences elsewhere (Goma, Zaire, Haiti)
3) Networking with other NGOs at the regional and international levels
4) International NGO coalitions: thematic areas
5) U.N. consultative status: how to apply criteria that govern consultative status with the U.N. Economic and Social Commission
6) Basic introduction to proposal writing, seeking funding for projects, and next steps

June 25

Relationship between peace and justice and *meaning of each in cultural context, meaning of impunity, option of setting the past behind and forgiving atrocities*

1) Crimes against humanity: nature, substance, and definition; Geneva conventions and protocols; intrastate conflict, claims against nonstate actors, role of children, and culpability issues; ICRC representative
2) Truth commissions and war crimes tribunals: mechanisms including jurisdictional issues and comparative assessments of experiences in South Africa and Rwanda; Maurice Nyberg, UNOMIL
3) Status of proposed permanent International Criminal Court
4) Discussion on peace and justice in Liberia; Archbishop Michael K. Francis
5) Evaluation of training: survey
6) Presentation of certificates of participation
7) International human rights instruments
8) International humanitarian instruments:
   Geneva Convention (Protocol I and Protocol 2, both signed and ratified in 1988)
9) Regional human rights instruments:
   African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights
   National instrument, status, laws
   Constitution of Liberia
10) Other relevant training materials: reports of SRs

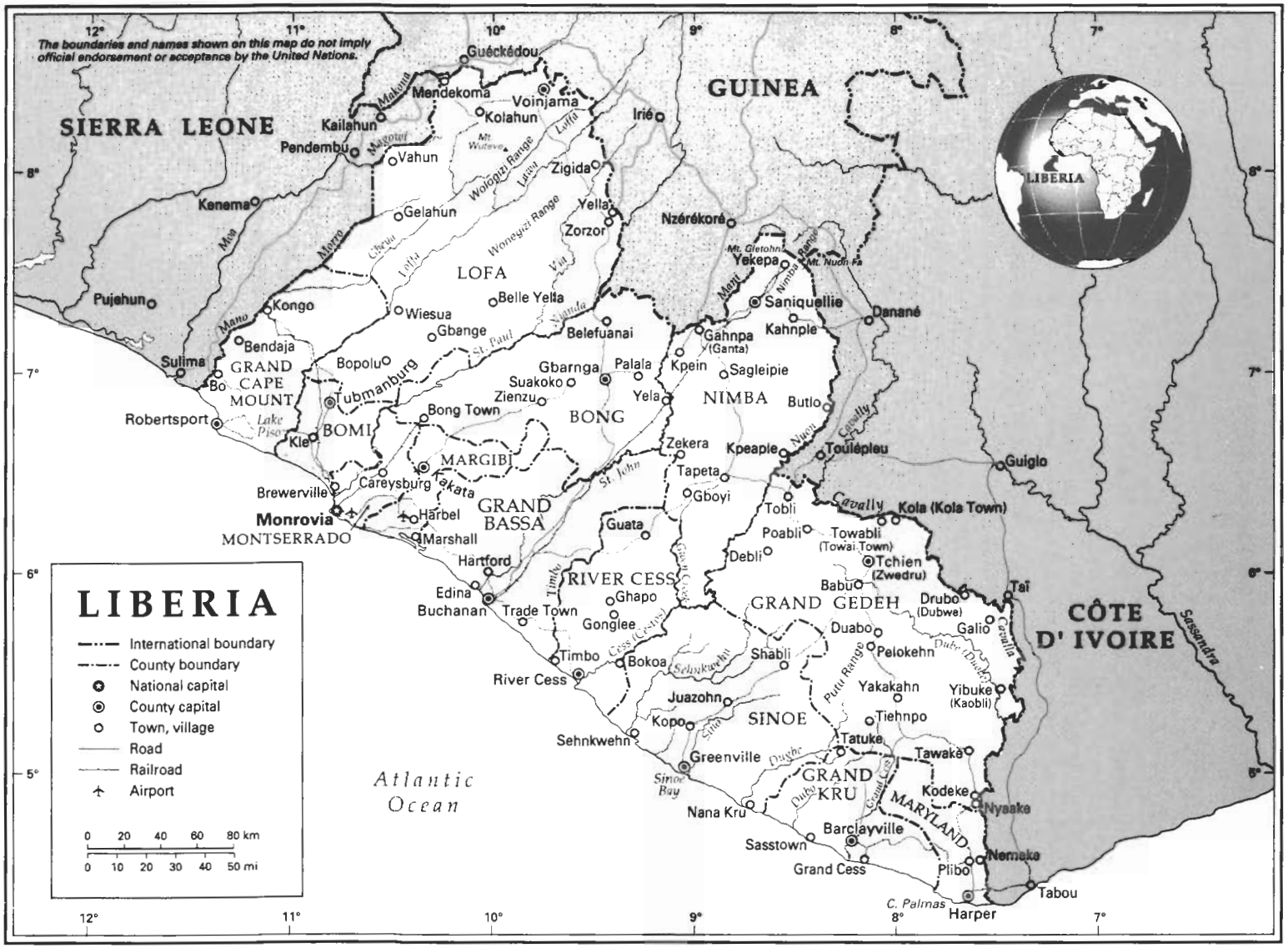
Appendix E

Carter Center Deployment Plan

July 19, 1997

Site	Observers
Lofa County	
Voinjama	Chip Carter Geoffrey Onegi-Obei
Zorzor	Agnieszka Paczynska Erik Oliver
Bong County	
Gbarnga	Edna Bay Adell Patton
Nimba County	
Sanniquelle/Ganta	Allison Boyer Carlos Walker
Grand Gedeh County	
Zwedru	Ranjit Singh Dana Trammell
Sinoe County	
Greenville	Cornelis van Bossum Jason Carter
Grand Bassa County	
Buchanan	Charisse Espy Ozong Agborsangaya
Grand Cape Mount County	
Sinje/Robertsport	Tom Crick Manuel Pinto
Bomi County	
Tubmanburg	Brooks Entwistle John Schelp

Site	Observers
Montserrado County	
Monrovia	
Team One	Jimmy Carter Rosalynn Carter Terrence Lyons Gordon Streeb
Team Two	Nicephore Soglo Coffi Randolph David Carroll
Team Three	Marie Angélique Savané Susan Palmer
Team Four	Vivian Lowery Derryck Nganda Mwanajiti
Team Five	Shelley McConnell Jeanne Simon
Team Six	Paul Simon Robert Pastor
Margibi County	
Kakata	Sanjit Kumar Teelok Mike Meenan


The boundaries and names shown on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.
LIBERIA
International boundary
County boundary
National capital
County capital
Town, village
Road
Railroad
Airport
0 20 40 60 80 km
0 10 20 30 40 50 mi
SIERRA LEONE
GUINEA
CÔTE D' IVOIRE
Atlantic Ocean
LOFA
GRAND CAPE MOUNT
BOMI
MARGIBI
GRAND BASSA
MONTSERRADO
BONG
NIMBA
RIVER CESS
GRAND GEDEH
SINOE
GRAND KRU
MARYLAND
Monrovia
Robertsport
Bopolu
Tubmanburg
Bong Town
Gbarnga
Suakoko
Zienzu
Kpein
Sagleipie
Saniquellie
Danané
Yekepa
Nzérékoré
Zorzor
Belle Yella
Wiesua
Gbange
Belefuanai
Gahnpa (Ganta)
Kahnple
Butlo
Yela
Palala
Zekera
Kpeaple
Toulépleu
Guiglo
Tapeta
Gboyi
Tobli
Poabli
Towabli (Towai Town)
Kola (Kola Town)
Tchien (Zwedru)
Debli
Babu
Drubo (Dubwe)
Tai
Galio
Duabo
Pelokehn
Shabli
Yakakahn
Yibuke (Kaobli)
Tiehnpo
Tatuke
Tawake
Kodeke
Nyaake
Barclayville
Nemake
Plibo
Tabou
Harper
C. Palmas
Sasstown
Grand Cess
Nana Kru
Greenville
Sinoe Bay
Sehnkwehn
Juazohn
Kopo
Timbo
Bokoa
River Cess
Edina
Buchanan
Trade Town
Gonglee
Ghapo
Hartford
Harbel
Marshall
Careysburg
Brewerville
Guata
Kailahun
Pendembu
Vahun
Kenema
Gelahun
Mendekoma
Kolahun
Voinjama
Guéckédou
Irié
Zigida
Yella
Pujehun
Kongo
Bendaja
Sulima
Bo
Kle
Lake Piso
Mt. Wuteve
Mt. Gletohn
Mt. Nuon Fa
Nimba Range
Wologizi Range
Wonegizi Range
Putu Range
Mano
Moa
Marro
Lofa
Loffa
Makona
Magonl
Lavel
Vuo
Saanda
St. Paul
St. John
Cavally
Nuon
Timbo
Cess (Cestos)
Sehnkwehn
Dugbe
Dubo
Grand Cess
Sassandra
Dube
Duabo
Sinoe
Map No. 3775 Rev. 2 UNITED NATIONS
August 1995
Department of Public Information
Cartographic Section

Appendix G

CARTER CENTER ELECTION DAY CHECKLIST
LIBERIA: 19 JULY 1997

Observer name/s: _____ Time at the polling station: _____

County: _____ District Polling Center:_____PS#:_____

Number of registered voters: _____ Number of ballots cast so far: _____

Average time it takes to vote: ____ mins. Number of people waiting in line: ____

==========

1. Which parties had representatives present? (list name/#)

_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

2. Were domestic observers present? (list group/#) _____

_____

3. Was ECOMOG present? Yes___ No ___ 4. Liberian security(explain)? Yes___No____

5. Were other international observers present? Yes _____ No _____

6. Did *party representative/domestic observers* indicate that there were:
   a) no problems _____ c. a few significant problems (explain on back)____
   b) a few, but not significant _____ d. many significant problems (explain in back)____

7. What is *your* overall evaluation of how voting was going at this polling station?
   a) Polling station functioned normally and without irregularity _____
   b) There were some minor irregularities that will not affect result at the polling station _____
   c) There were serious problems which could potentially distort result at the PS _____

8. Check off any problems you observed and explain in detail on the back of the form

a) Station opened late	____	g) Party representatives denied access	____
b) Station closed/suspended	____	h) Domestic observers denied access	____
c) Insufficient materials	____	i) PS officials missing	____
d) Security problems	____	j) Campaigning/propaganda	____
e) Ballot not secret	____	k)Unauthorized persons present	____
f) Officials poorly trained	____	l) Other (explain)	____

9. How many voters were denied an opportunity to vote thus far? _____
   Reasons (specify number of voters affected):
   a) Not on registration list _____
   b) Had no registration card _____
   c) Came to the wrong polling station _____
   d) Other _____

CARTER CENTER CLOSING AND COUNTING FORM
LIBERIA: 19 JULY 1997

Observer name/s: _____ Time at the polling station: _____

County: _____ District Polling Center:_____PS#:_____

Time PS closed: _____ Time counting began: _____ Time counting ended: _____

==========

1. Which parties had representatives present? (list name/#)

_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

2. Were domestic observers present? (list group/#) _____

_____

3. Was ECOMOG present? Yes____ No____ 4. Liberian security(explain)? Yes ____ No ___

5. Were other international observers present? Yes_____ No_____

6. Did *party representative/domestic observers* indicate that there were:
   a) no problems _____ c. a few significant problems (explain on back)____
   b) a few, but not significant _____ d. many significant problems (explain in back)____

7. What is *your* overall evaluation of how counting was going at this polling station?
   a) Counting functioned normally and without irregularity _____
   b) There were some minor irregularities that will not affect result at polling station_____
   c) There were serious problems which could potentially distort result _____

8. Check off any problems you observed and explain in detail on the back of the form
   a) People in line at 4:00pm not allowed to vote: ____
   b) Station closed/suspended ____ g) Domestic observers denied access ____
   c) Insufficient materials ____ h) PS officials missing ____
   d) Security problems ____ i) Campaigning/propaganda ____
   e) Officials poorly trained ____ j) Unauthorized persons present ____
   f) Party reps denied access ____ k) Tally sheets not given to parties ____

_____

registered voters: _____ # votes cast:_____ # challenged votes:_____ # rejected ballots: ____

Parties	Votes	Parties	Votes

Appendix H

F R O M

THE CARTER CENTER

THE CARTER CENTER
LIBERIAN SPECIAL ELECTIONS
PRELIMINARY STATEMENT
JULY 21, 1997

On behalf of my co-leaders former President Nicephore Soglo of Benin and former U.S. Senator Paul Simon, and our entire delegation, I want to make this statement about the July 19 Special Elections in Liberia and the evolving electoral process we have observed.

The process leading to these elections has been long and difficult. In the face of tremendous challenges the Liberian people have conducted a peaceful and orderly election, and turned out in very high numbers to vote, and the collection and reporting of returns should lead to an accurate count.

The Carter Center has been involved in Liberia since 1991 and has conducted three pre-election assessment missions since March 1997. In our meetings with the representatives of the principal political parties before the election, we asked two questions: whether the overall election procedure evolved by ECOWAS was considered to be fair; and whether they would accept the results of the election if the count was accurate, and the election process was judged to be fair. Each of the representatives answered affirmatively to both questions.

Our 40 person delegation was deployed several days before the election to 10 of Liberia's 13 counties, and on election day, we observed the voting and counting processes in more than 10 percent of all the polling sites. Yesterday, the group reconvened in Monrovia for debriefings and to compile our report. This statement reflects our team's assessment of the election.

Our delegation was impressed with several aspects of the election:

High participation – Although official figures are not available, it is clear that Liberians wanted to vote, and vote they did in great numbers. Many got up as early as 2 a.m. and waited patiently in long lines to demonstrate their determination to bring closure to seven years of war. While final results are not yet available, we estimate participation to be very high.

Preparations -- Despite the compressed time for the electoral process, our delegates found that virtually all of the sites that they observed had adequate materials, and were staffed by

workers from the Independent Elections Commission (IECOM). They were aided by many key actors, including ECOMOG, UNOMIL, the OAU, the EU, IFES, The Carter Center, and others.

Security -- The role played by ECOMOG was vital in providing security and ensuring a climate of calm at the polls. Our delegates found that ECOMOG soldiers were present in all the polling centers they observed and were instrumental in keeping the process orderly. We were encouraged by the absence of intimidation by ECOMOG soldiers and by Liberians' perception of them as impartial. We also found the role played by the new Liberian Police Force in Monrovia to be encouraging.

Observers -- We were pleasantly surprised by Liberians' appreciation of the role of the international community, especially of international observers. We were impressed by the dedication and effectiveness of the domestic observers from LEON, the Council of Churches, human rights groups, and others. Finally, we appreciated the cooperation and coordination we had with other international observer groups.

In the more than 200 polling stations which our delegates visited, we found that 73% had two or more party agents present to observe the process. In addition, domestic observers, primarily from LEON, were present at roughly 64% of the polling stations visited.

In addition, in about 93% of the stations we observed, party agents and domestic observers indicated to our observers that there were either "no problems," or "a few but not significant problems." Similarly, our delegates reported that the voting process "functioned normally" and/or with only "some minor irregularities" in 98% of the stations visited.

Some believe that an absolutely level playing field is essential for elections to be considered free and fair. Although desirable as a goal, in certain circumstances we think it is more important to address the questions of whether people have an adequate opportunity to know the candidates' positions; to be free to choose among the candidates; and to have their preferences translated fairly into results.

While Liberia's election appears so far to have addressed these key issues, we list below some problems with the process that are related to the compressed timetable, the logistical complications of the country, and the fact that the country is just emerging from a long civil war:

Registration -- The registration list was not fully completed by the time of the election. This information is critical to the normal conduct of any election in order to permit citizens and parties to ensure the accuracy of the list. Despite this problem, people seemed to know where to vote and did so with minimal confusion.

Uneven access and resources -- The unevenness of the candidates' access to the media and to resources for campaigns is regrettable. While we feel that the candidates were able to get their messages out to many people, it is important to make additional efforts to address this problem in the future.

Separating security and electoral management -- The role of ECOMOG in providing security and logistical assistance was vital. We believe that the election could not have been held in such an orderly way without ECOMOG's security presence, and that Liberians sincerely appreciated their various efforts to assist. However, in addition to providing security, some ECOMOG troops were involved in the conduct of the elections. In the future, it is important that the military's exclusive role should be to provide security, leaving the conduct of the elections to civilian election administrators.

Electoral process -- On the whole, our observers found that election day processes went well. However, we noted several problems in the process that we suggest be addressed in future elections. First, given the large numbers of illiterate voters and others needing assistance, measures should be developed for civic and voter education. This is essential to meaningful elections. We hope the newly elected administration will give a high priority to education.

Second, many of our delegates noted problems polling officials had in ruling on valid ballots. IECOM correctly, but belatedly, sent instructions to polling officials about ballots being valid if marks showed voters' intent. But, this instruction was not received by all workers, and some who did receive it were confused.

Third, for collecting, counting, and reporting the official returns the processes were excessively complicated, and these were made worse by the compressed electoral calendar and inadequate registration information.

Overall, the election represents a very important step forward for Liberia, and its long-term prospects for lasting peace and democracy. Although we have noted several problems about the process, we feel that none were serious enough to have altered the people's opportunity to select their leaders freely and fairly.

This election needs to be understood as an important step forward in the context of the peace process. It is also essential to understand that democracy is not established with a single good election. For the peace process to succeed, and for democracy to take root, it is essential that the government put in place a system to assure checks and balances among institutions, defense of human rights, and accountability to all the people. We were pleased at the invitation of so many Liberians that they would like the international community to continue to play an important role in reinforcing the democratic process.

This election could provide a turning point for Liberia – between a bitter civil war and a hopeful future of prosperity and democracy. The positive future, however, will only come if all parties in Liberia demonstrate their commitment to the peaceful process of democracy-building, allay fears that some have of others, and rejuvenate a feeling of nationhood and civic pride that will help their country advance. We hope that the spirit of election day will guide Liberians in the days ahead.

Appendix I

Presidential Vote Results

(by party)

Total # of Registered Voters	621,880	100.00%
	Number of Valid Votes Obtained	Percent of Valid Votes Obtainer
NPP	468,443	75.32691
UP	59,557	9.576928
ALCOP	25,059	4.029556
UPP	15,604	2.509166
ALLIANCE	15,969	2.567859
LPP	10,010	1.609635
NDPL	7,843	1.261176
LINU	6,708	1.078665
PDPL	3,497	0.562327
NRP	2,965	0.47678
PPP	2,142	0.344439
RAP	2,067	0.332379
FDP	2,016	0.324178

Source: IECOM

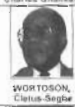
Appendix J

IECOM SERIAL No 1340962

INDEPENDENT ELECTIONS COMMISSION OF LIBERIA

BALLOT PAPER

PUT A MARK IN THE BOX OF YOUR CHOICE

EMBLEM, NAME & ACRONYM OF PARTY / ALLIANCE	PICTURE & NAME OF PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES	VOTING MARK
PROGRESSIVE PEOPLE'S PARTY (P P P)	 CHEAPOO, Chea	
NATIONAL REFORMATION PARTY (N R P)	 SHERIFF, Martin M. N.	
FREE DEMOCRATIC PARTY (F D P)	 GBOLLIE, Kayah J. Sieh	
LIBERIAN NATIONAL UNION (LINU)	 MONRA, Dr. Harry Fumba	
UNITY PARTY (U P)	 JOHNSON-SIRLEAF, Ellen	
ALL LIBERIAN COALITION PARTY (ALCOP)	 KROMAH, Alhaji Garzim Varmuyan	
NATIONAL PATRIOTIC PARTY (N P P)	 TAYLOR, Charles Ghankay	
ALLIANCE OF POLITICAL PARTIES	 WORTOSON, Cletus-Segbe	
REFORMATION ALLIANCE PARTY (R A P)	 FAHNBULLEH, Henry Boima	
PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF LIBERIA (P D P L)	 WASHINGTON, George Toe	
UNITED PEOPLE'S PARTY (U P P)	 MATTHEWS, Gabriel Baccus	
NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF LIBERIA (N D P L)	 BOLEY SR., George E. Saigbe	
LIBERIAN PEOPLE'S PARTY (L P P)	 TIPOTEH, Togba-Nah	

Appendix K

New York Times 4-11-96 1 of 4

Americans Fleeing Liberia Tell of New Horrors There

By HOWARD W. FRENCH

LUNGI, Sierra Leone, April 10 -- Scores of Americans and citizens of other countries fleeing Liberia today were ferried through Sierra Leone's main airport here by United States troops after four days of intense fighting by rival militias in the neighboring country.

The shaken evacuees, arriving throughout the day in groups of 25 aboard lumbering American MH-53 helicopters, painted a picture of a country whose slide out of control in the space of an Easter weekend surpassed any of the horrors that many said they had seen in six years of a vicious civil war.

Many of the 200 or so evacuees who were flown out by nightfall today had spent several days in the relative security of the American Embassy compound in the Liberian capital, Monrovia, which was the staging ground for the evacuation.

Others, however, had made their way only as recently as this morning to the embassy by darting furtively through gutted streets that had been reduced to shooting galleries by rival militia bands composed of boys carrying automatic weapons.

"From Benson Street to Carey Street we made our way to Mamba Point this morning," said Nour Abou Nasr, a Lebanese woman describing the route she took out of the shattered downtown area to Monrovia's diplomatic enclave. "All along the way we kept getting stopped by one group after another of young boys, half-dressed, wearing anything, even bedroom slippers, shooting their guns off and looting."

"This was much worse than in 1990," she said, comparing the city's violence to the worst fighting she had seen, shortly after the start of the country's civil war.

By late today, 273 people had been evacuated from Monrovia, including 61 Americans, according to State Department officials in Washington, who estimated that there were 450 "Americans of all kinds" in Liberia. Officials said that this figure included Liberians who have been naturalized as American citizens.

Diplomats said that only about 110 Americans in Liberia had made it to the embassy compound and that some of those had chosen to stay behind for now in the hope that the country's crisis dies down.

Most of the Americans who did not get out are gathered in other locations in Liberia, including a pocket of

Continued on Page A7, Column 1

New York Times 4-11-96 2 of 4

Evacuees From Liberia Tell of Chaos and Horror

Continued from Page A1

about 80 people on the outskirts of Monrovia and and some smaller ones.

The embassy and military are in touch with all of them by radio or telephone, but the decision is yet to be made on whether to go get them, or how to get them, or whether it is quiet enough for them to reach the embassy. By tonight, it has not been.

"So now comes the tough part," Glyn Davies, a State Department spokesman, said in Washington today. "We must in some fashion confront the chaos. Not guns blazing Rambo-like, but we'll have to deal with it. Maybe the factions will calm down enough; otherwise, there might be some derring-do."

Among longtime residents of the country, comparisons with fighting in 1990 and 1991, when another American evacuation was carried out as rebel forces commanded by Charles Taylor waged an offensive against Samuel K. Doe, then the dictator.

The New York Times

Rival militias continue to make the streets of Monrovia dangerous.

Sharon Bitar, an English evacuee who fled with her husband and two small boys, said, "This thing happened so quickly and so terribly that in four days it was as if we had relived the horror of the entire war."

Hundreds, perhaps thousands, of people were killed in Mr. Taylor's 1990 assault on the capital, which was finally halted by a Nigerian-led regional peacekeeping force. So far, the situation in Monrovia remains so confused that no one, including the American authorities conducting the evacuation, have given casualty estimates from the fighting there.

This time as well, the Nigerian-led peacekeeping force has been virtually invisible on the streets in many neighborhoods of Monrovia, and diplomats and evacuees say it has not been a factor in quelling the violence.

What has become clear from radio reports from the Liberian capital and from interviews with evacuees is that many of the residents of a city whose population had swollen badly because of its more recent reputation as a haven from danger were caught in heavy crossfire from rival militias or subject to almost random bombings by artillery and rocket-propelled grenades.

The two worst-affected areas of the city appear to have been downtown Monrovia, only last week a free-wheeling place of bustling commerce and lively street life, that witnesses said was thoroughly gutted, and Sinkor, an outlying residential district where the violence began early Saturday as Government efforts to arrest a renegade minister, Gen. D. Roosevelt Johnson, spiraled into uncontrolled factional fighting.

In the downtown area, a clearly distressed Welshman who declined to identify himself further said that he was caught in a popular restaurant-bar, El Meson, when the fighting broke out. As trouble spread, the man said, he tookt a few women and children into a room in the hotel above the bar to shelter them.

Fighters from the Ulimo-K militia, one of several factions involved in the conflict, soon entered the place, however, and forced everyone out. As the Welshman made his way toward Mamba Point, he said, fighters forced Liberians and foreigners to separate and began abusing the Liberians.

"They were raping the women and shooting all over the place," the man said. "It was an absolute horror. But the most disturbing thing of all was, while we watched the scene from the hotel, with people getting killed all around us, the little boys I was with began pretending they, too, were soldiers."

The fighting in Sinkor started early Saturday morning when General Johnson and his militiamen decided to break out of the villa where they had been surrounded and make their way toward the downtown area, where ethnic allies of the rebel leader are garrisoned in the former National Army barracks.

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"I had been listening to the radios, and they were just barking all night," said John Langlois, the resident director of the Carter Center of Emory University whose home and office are near General Johnson's headquarters. "Then at about 3:20 A.M. the shooting began."

Mr. Langlois said that the shooting in his neighborhood was so heavy that it was not until around 11:30 that morning that he felt he could venture out of his villa for the first time and make his way toward town.

Like many foreigners, Mr. Langlois left his Liberian staff behind, telling them that when the looters came to give them whatever they wanted.

"There were stray bullets flying everywhere," he said. "It was just like swarms of bees coming down the street. When I finally got onto the main road to town I found about 10,000 people — Liberians — marching toward the Mamba Point area, carrying all kinds of baggage on their heads."

Some Americans in Monrovia wait to make the run to the embassy.

Others said that as the militias pursued their looting in neighborhoods like these that it seemed that the violence was limited by a tacit parceling up of the city, where militias concentrated on ransacking homes and businesses, making off with whatever they could cart away before turning against each other.

This methodical looting gave many people time to escape their neighborhoods before full-fledged combat between the militias broke out.

By the end of the day on Saturday, diplomats say, the Mamba Point area, a tiny spit of seafront land that houses the major foreign embassies, was packed with tens of thousands of displaced Liberians.

Today, an American Embassy annex in the area, which is little more than a small open field, was the place of refuge for 10,000 to 15,000 people fleeing the violence.

People who made it out in the evacuation today said that the mood among displaced people in the Mamba Point area had calmed during the day after a desperate night during which the shelling of a military barracks could be heard nearby.

A mood of calm spread among the refugees as reports circulated that General Johnson, a rural development minister and militia leader who was being sought on murder charges had agreed to surrender to regional peacekeepers as part of a truce agreement.

By evening today, however, hopes of a cease-fire were burst when Mr. Johnson denied that he had reached any agreement in an interview with the BBC, and heavy fighting again resumed.

Earlier in the day, General Johnson's forces reportedly released 40 hostages it had taken from among the West African peacekeeping but diplomats said the renegade minister still held as many as 400 other hostages of various nationalities.

As night fell and the evacuation continued, United States military officials here said that one of the helicopters flying into Monrovia to pick up more evacuees had to abort its landing at the embassy compound as explosions were heard nearby and it appeared that the aircraft might come under hostile fire.

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JUL-16-97 12:24 PM P.01

A MESSAGE TO LIBERIANS FROM FORMER U.S. PRESIDENT JIMMY CARTER

On Saturday, Liberians will choose through secret ballot the next president and legislature of their country. A successful election will demonstrate to the world your fervent desire for peace and democracy. All of us in the international community applaud the courage, enthusiasm, and determination that have brought the Liberian people to this critical juncture.

Observers are here from organizations around the world, including The Carter Center. We have full confidence in the Independent Elections Commission, and will comply with their rules and instructions. Our role is to help ensure that you have the freedom to vote as you choose, and that your vote will be secret and counted accurately-and to determine whether the election results reflect the will of Liberians. As the eyes and ears of the international community, observers from The Carter Center, the United Nations, the European Union, and Friends of Liberia will help to deter fraud.

International observers are partial to the democratic process, but completely neutral with regard to the outcome of the election. We are here to support will of the Liberian people, not any individual candidate.

We hope our presence will reassure voters that you can cast your ballots safely and secretly. Indeed, in preparation for this election, other Carter Center observers and I met many times with election officials and party leaders to discuss electoral procedures. Assessments were made of the registration process, voter education efforts, and the fairness of the campaign – all in an effort to guarantee that your participation in Saturday's election will not be in vain.

On election day you will see observers with survey forms at many polling sites. We will witness the entire process, including preparations to open the polls in the early morning, voting procedure, and the counting of votes. In addition to talking with polling site officials and party leaders, we will want to hear from you, the citizens, and will note any complaints. After pols close, we will observe the counting and delivery of ballot boxes to confirm that the announced final results reflect the true vote.

Pres. Carter

After the Independent Elections Commission announces the outcome of the election, The Carter Center and other observer groups will announce what we saw and heard on election day. We will share our findings with the candidates and encourage everyone to accept and respect the election results. Should a run-off for the presidency be necessary, we will observe that election too.

I am confident that, under direction of the Independent Elections Commission and with the help of ECOMOG troops, the international media will be able to show the world that Liberians voted not only in large number, but freely and safely.

Please vote, as your conscience dictates, and have confidence that your secret vote will count. You can help guarantee a future of peace, freedom, and progress for your children.

USA Today 7/21/97

Warlord's man-of-action image leads to landslide win in Liberia

By Tina Susman
The Associated Press

MONROVIA, Liberia — Seven years ago, fighters loyal to warlord Charles Taylor killed five of Samukah Corneh's brothers as they tried to flee Liberia's new civil war.

Yet when he went to vote for a president last Saturday, Corneh firmly pressed his inky thumb onto the ballot space next to Taylor's picture.

So did most Liberians, according to results that show Taylor headed for a landslide victory in this tortured land his fighters helped destroy. Despite his bloody past, Taylor benefited from a fractured opposition that underestimated his appeal.

Many Liberians view him as the man who had the guts to end the dictatorship of Samuel Doe in 1990, and who has the muscle to prevent another war in a country founded by freed American slaves in 1847.

That image, along with a well-organized campaign that Taylor had years to hone, combined to give Taylor 75% of the vote, according to results released Tuesday by the Independent Elections Commission. A 40-member international team of election observers included former president Jimmy Carter.

Taylor's closest rival, former U.N. official Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, had 9.5% of the vote, with 75% of the vote counted. Johnson-Sirleaf, who spent the past 10 years in the United States, quit as the Africa director for the U.N. Development Program in May to return as a candidate. By then it was too late to win over a country that for seven years had known Taylor as its most formidable leader.

Taylor, 49, was a favorite from the start but had been expected to face Johnson-Sirleaf, 58, in a runoff next month. Those who voted for him, however, and even some of those who didn't, say his trouncing of the 12 other contenders in the first round shouldn't have been a total surprise.

"Mr. Taylor had done his homework," said Daniel Gbardoe of the Center for Democratic Empowerment, a Monrovia-based group that seeks to promote democracy in Africa. "In the past seven years he had been able to impress upon people that he was their leader. When election time came, he had the means, the resources, the radio communications to spread his propaganda. He had a better-organized machine."

Like many Liberians, Corneh, 33, welcomed Taylor's Christmas Eve 1989 incursion to oust Doe, who had seized power 10 years earlier in a military coup and imposed a dictatorship that favored his Krahn tribe.

Though Corneh and his brothers were Krahn, Doe was one of Africa's most brutal dictators and many, even from his own ethnic group, desperately wanted to see him go.

"We could not succeed through politics to get rid of Doe," said Corneh. "The best alternative was through some military uprising, which is what Taylor did."

His brothers died when Taylor's men, seeking revenge for Doe's abuses, rounded up Krahns in northern Lofa County, tortured them and killed them as they tried to flee across the border to Sierra Leone shortly after the war began. Corneh escaped and lived off roots and relief aid.

"People believe that even though he's the man who started the war, he's the only man who can take care of them," said Francis Manneh, one of Taylor's opponents who ended up voting for Johnson-Sirleaf.

While Taylor handed out T-shirts and promised jobs and security to the impoverished and war-weary, Johnson-Sirleaf, with her Harvard MBA and high-paying Western career, was seen by many as a virtual foreigner with no understanding of the average Liberian's problems.

Johnson-Sirleaf won support from women and intellectuals, but they represented a minority of the country's 751,000 registered voters. Most voters were males between the ages of 18 and 30, as were most of Taylor's fighters. "They saw security in Mr. Taylor, because he's the one who stood by them for so many years," Gbardoe said.

The New York Times 7/22/97 page 1 of2

Liberia Gets Fair Vote, Courtesy of Neighbors

By DONALD G. McNEIL Jr.

MONROVIA, Liberia, July 21 — One of the lessons of the Liberian presidential election this weekend seems to be: if you want a free and fair election in Africa, make sure it's run by a police state — somebody else's.

The West African peacekeeping force has won virtually universal praise. Although the voting on Saturday was overseen by an American consulting firm, all the crucial roles were played by the 10,500 soldiers, most of whom come from countries like Nigeria and Ghana where leaders hold power by force, corruption is a part of doing business and dissidents are frequently jailed.

In February, using unmistakable threats, the soldiers compelled Liberia's rival militias to hand in their weapons. They escorted presidential aspirants on the campaign trail and swore that any rocks thrown at candidates would be answered with bullets. On voting day, they not only kept the long lines at the polls orderly, but in some remote areas also marked ballots for illiterate voters who had never held a pencil.

That, naturally, has led to some protests from the losing candidate, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, but foreign election monitors said that the soldiers they watched acted impartially and that poll observers from Mrs. Johnson-Sirleaf's party said they were not upset.

Today, with about a third of the vote counted, Charles G. Taylor's lead widened to 66 percent, with Mrs. Johnson-Sirleaf at 16 percent.

Mr. Taylor has not claimed victory, but his party warned its supporters "not to indulge in any forms of jubilation" before the final count is announced.

Former President Jimmy Carter and former Senator Paul Simon, both here as observers, said the Liberian election was run better than ones they had seen in Bosnia, Croatia and Haiti.

They particularly praised the Nigerian military commander, Maj. Gen. Victor Malu, as did Brian O'Neill, aid coordinator here for the European Commission.

"He's one of the heroes of the election," Mr. O'Neill said. Referring to the West African peacekeeping force by its acronym, he added, "And Ecomog is only as good as its commander."

Troops from African lands without free elections manage to insure one.

In this case, that certainly seems true. In April 1996, when fighting between the militias destroyed most of this seaside city, the Ecomog commander, Gen. John Inienger, was widely blamed. He had become close to Mr. Taylor and his men were falling into the habit of petty corruption. Letters demanding that the soldiers leave were read over the airwaves. He also had fallen out with the European donors offering to help the country.

Then, after Mr. Taylor's troops attacked another warlord's headquarters and a Nigerian unit was decimated in the crossfire and pulled back, General Inienger was replaced by General Malu, a longtime infantry commander who had trained in Britain and at Fort Benning, Ga., and helped found his country's National War College.

Even putting aside what happened this week, it was an interesting choice. General Malu's last assignment to Liberia, in 1993, had been leading assaults on Mr. Taylor's forces.

When he arrived in Monrovia again last year, he said, "people were fraternizing with the factions. Everybody was a Your Excellency — they were carrying arms openly. That was why the city was destroyed. I told them, 'From the 8th of February, if you have arms, we'll treat you like a common criminal.' They didn't believe me. But the first one I went after was a warlord, Alhaji Kromah. We arrested him in his home, took a statement and handed him to the police.

"The United Nations Human Rights group questioned why we were arresting people. I explained politely that we were saving lives. You can't protect someone's human rights if they're dead. And now, Liberia is more arms-free than Nigeria."

General Malu has said he can get along with Mr. Taylor — although it is clear he does not consider him an equal.

One of the greatest worries of the people living in this country and the aid agencies pumping money into it is that Mr. Taylor, who has some

Associated Press

Charles Taylor, left, took a wide lead yesterday in Liberia's presidential election over Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf. Both candidates voted in Monrovia.

skilled technocrats in his planned Cabinet and is an astute businessman but still retains an entourage of young thugs, will fill top army and police posts with them.

General Malu was adamant that that would not happen. "Absolutely not," he said. "Charles Taylor is president of a country that we've managed to pull together. We have a mandate to restructure the armed forces, and the recruitment model has been drawn up — it cuts across all the tribal groups. He won't have any control."

Officers, he said, will be trained outside Liberia, and he won't quit the country until he's happy with the army he's been assigned to create. "Charles Taylor didn't give me that assignment," he added.

The United States is training the country's police force. George Aylward, a former New York Police Department detective and chief in Middletown, Conn., said he had been allowed to choose his first 500 trainees from the remnants of the force predating the 1990 civil war.

Some officers had once gone to Britain and even the F.B.I. Academy for training, he said, but had since worked for years not just without cars, but without even pens or handcuffs in a headquarters without tables, chairs, lights or water.

Asked if he was worried about the brutalized young men of Mr. Taylor's militia joining a force that, before the war, didn't even carry guns, he said: "We're going to try to set up a department that doesn't let them in."

Underpinning all this is concern about how long the West African peacekeepers will stay. Nigeria has already spent $3.5 billion since 1990 and wants to pull out.

General Malu acknowledged that today, while praising the United States for supplying helicopters, trucks, uniforms, boots, radios, tents, medical supplies and other goods. He also noted — in an unflattering comparison — how much political stomach the West African countries had shown.

"In Somalia, how many men did the United States lose before it decided to quit?" he asked. "Twenty-one? And not very many in Beirut. We've lost 500 men in combat here."

The Atlanta Journal and Constitution 8/21/97

Long road to democracy in Liberia

Democracy will work in Liberia, but it's not quite working yet.

That was the message from Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, runner-up in last month's election in the West African country, during a visit with Atlanta's Liberian community this week.

Before the election, many had predicted Johnson-Sirleaf would force a runoff with Charles Taylor, a former warlord heavily involved in the nation's seven-year civil war. But when the votes were counted, Taylor had 75 percent to just under 10 percent for Johnson-Sirleaf.

After threatening to challenge the results, she eventually accepted the count. In the future, however, she said she hopes to see elections conducted on a more "level playing field."

Former U.S. President Jimmy Carter deserves praise for supporting the Liberian peace process, ending the civil war, and "bringing international attention to what might easily have been just a backwater African election with no notice," Johnson-Sirleaf said. She also credited Carter, an election monitor, with helping make sure the voting was free, though not, in her opinion, truly fair.

Liberia suffers from a 70 percent illiteracy rate, and much more education about the electoral process is needed, she said. She also faulted "shortcomings of the registration process" and "an element of intimidation."

"Many people indeed may have voted their fears," Johnson-Sirleaf said, pointing to wide speculation Taylor might restart the civil war if he lost.

DWIGHT ROSS JR. / Staff

Liberian Community Association member Mabel Green (left) greets former Liberian candidate Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf

But she called the election a "building block" in a long process toward real democracy. And she said she was pleased that few voters questioned the idea that a woman could lead the country.

Since the election, Johnson-Sirleaf, who has worked the past five years as Africa director for the U.N. Development Program, said she has told Taylor she does not wish to be part of his government.

She said she does hope to work on community development projects and help resettle refugees from the civil war. And she intends to keep a close eye on the new president.

"Mr. Taylor talks well. He's very articulate," Johnson-Sirleaf said. But she said she still doubts he can make the "miraculous change" necessary to transform himself from rebel leader to effective president.

Johnson-Sirleaf's trip here is one of several she is taking while winding up her U.N. duties before moving back to Liberia. She tells audiences that not only Liberians living in the United States but all Americans should take an interest in her country: "Liberia has had a long-standing, good relationship with the United States, and much of Liberia's value system and culture comes from the United States — particularly the Southern United States."

If Taylor sticks by the Liberian Constitution, his first term of office will end in six years.

"God willing, life and health permitting," Johnson-Sirleaf will run again. "And hopefully, I'll be much more prepared that time," she said.

— *Keith Graham*

Election May Signal an End to Liberia's Seven Years of Upheaval

By James Rupert
Washington Post Foreign Service

MONROVIA, Liberia—Liberia has edged back from the abyss.

It's unclear how far or how reliably the West African state has moved away from its seven-year spasm of killing, burning and looting. But last week's election—supervised by an African peacekeeping force and funded by Western governments—has given Liberians their first credible government in 12 years.

Many analysts caution that Liberia could easily slip back into anarchy. The new government, taking office Saturday, will be led by President-elect Charles Taylor, a warlord whose forces were among the most brutal of the half-dozen factions scrambling for power since 1990. Taylor has promised to seek reconciliation by inviting rival leaders into his government, but democracy and power-sharing "go against his grain," a diplomat said.

And even a stable government will be unable to quickly fulfill Liberians' hopes for relief from the misery of daily life. "We could see these same Liberians" who elected Taylor "protesting in the streets a few months from now," another diplomat said.

But even fragile order is a startling recovery from the chaos of 14 months ago. For six weeks in the spring of 1996, Taylor's young gunmen and those of rival factions rampaged in an orgy of killing, looting and raping that shattered this capital city—including facilities of the United Nations and other agencies trying to rebuild the country. Major foreign aid donors came close to abandoning Liberia as a hopeless case.

Liberia's progress may offer hope and lessons for efforts, including those by the Clinton administration, to create an African peacekeeping contingent that could be used in this continent's many crises. Peacemaking efforts here—led by a regional organization, the Economic Community of West African States—were a failure for more than six years, leaving more than a dozen failed truce agreements and peace pacts. Only since last year's upheaval has its peacekeeping force, called ECOMOG, exercised enough control over the factions to pave the way for elections.

Having sponsored the election of a Liberian government, the West African initiative faces tough new tasks. The peacekeeping force must build a neutral—and at least minimally professional—army and police force that can win public confidence and keep order. Its commander, Nigerian Maj. Gen. Victor Malu, said last week that he will bar Taylor or other warlords from "any undue influence . . . in the restructuring" of the security forces.

The Liberian accord calls for the peacekeeping force to stay on six more months—too little time, diplomats and the force's officials say, to reliably build an army. Malu voiced confidence Taylor will reach agreement with the West Africans to extend the mission. But Nigerian Foreign Minister Tom Ikimi, whose country has supplied most of the peace force's troops and money, was noncommittal about the chances for an extension, and other diplomats expressed concern that Taylor will seek to reinforce his electoral mandate with some kind of armed force under his control.

Taylor, who won 75 percent of the presidential vote, will also have legislative majorities big enough to change the constitution, a diplomat said. But "he has relied for years on guns, and while we would like to believe he is fully weaned from them, that's not yet proven," said another.

The consolidation of peace will face other dangers. While a disarmament drive carried out by the peacekeeping force recovered many of the Liberians' weapons in January, all observers agree that substantial armament remains cached.

One problem is that a faction bitterly opposed to Taylor occupies a military camp adjacent to the presidential offices, with an estimated 10,000 former fighters and their families. "They will probably fight rather than vacate," a diplomat said, and Taylor's security will depend on moving them out. That need "might give ECOMOG a negotiating lever" with Taylor, he said.

Nonetheless, Liberia's turnaround in the past 14 months has been "almost a miracle," according to former president Jimmy Carter, who led a team of election observers.

The sacking of Monrovia in the spring of 1996 "almost killed the international role" in Liberia, said Brian O'Neill, a representative here of the European Commission, a major aid donor to Liberia. At the time, his aid mission "had an emergency meeting [and] talked of pulling out," he said.

The gangs of gunmen had spooked the peacekeeping force into hiding at its base—and then wrecked the offices and stole the vehicles of the United Nations and most other aid organizations in Monrovia. "Only our office," in the otherwise unoccupied Italian Embassy building, "and the American Embassy had been spared," O'Neill said. "I think if they had hit our office, we might have given up."

But independently, key international players in Liberia "decided to give it one more try," a diplomat said.

West Africa's leaders, humiliated by the televised defiance of Liberia's gangs in pillaging Monrovia, finally got tough with the warlords. Led by Nigeria's military ruler, Gen. Sani Abacha, they browbeat the factions into accepting a peace process with a tight schedule, vowing sanctions against anyone who disrupted it.

Nigeria, which held the command of the peacekeeping force, sent Malu—described by Carter as "a uniquely superior commander"—to whip the force into shape. It had been criticized for years for partiality, corruption and irresolution.

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But "within a month of [Malu's] arrival" in June 1996, "we were selling him back in our capitals" as an officer who could anchor a renewed international peace effort on the ground, O'Neill said. West African states bolstered the force from 8,000 to 10,000 troops, permitting Malu to deploy it, if thinly, across Liberian territory.

African and Western governments cooperated in a way some suggested could serve as a model for future combined crisis response on this continent. While each West African nation bore the costs of feeding and paying its soldiers here, European governments offset the costs for some countries with increased economic aid.

African armies overwhelmingly lack heavy trucks, communications equipment and maintenance capacities. So, with what O'Neill said was "particularly intensive coordination," the United States, Britain, Germany, the Netherlands and other nations provided them. The United States hired a Washington-based contractor, Pacific Architects and Engineers Inc., to maintained heavy equipment and manage a fleet of helicopters for the peacekeeping force.

Malu and other officers said the West African force seemed less troubled by squabbles over command structure than have other forces, such as those of NATO or the United Nations in the former Yugoslavia.

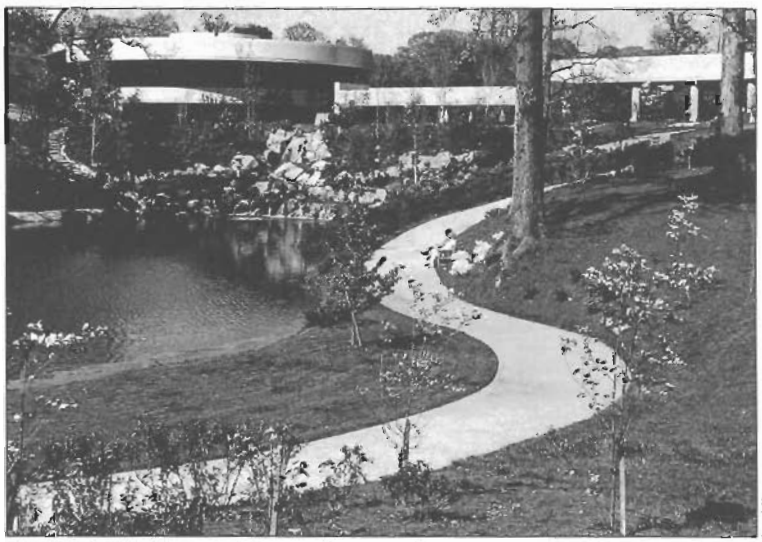
"It is the first time that Anglophone and Francophone troops have worked together in Africa," said Maj. Boubakar Balla, commander of the peacekeeping contingent from Niger. "It shows we can do it." And it may offer hope for a Clinton administration program that this month sent U.S. trainers to several African countries, both Anglophone and Francophone, in an effort to build peacekeeping capabilities on the continent.

About The Carter Center

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

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

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



Paul Dingman

The Carter Center is located in a 35-acre park two miles east of downtown Atlanta.

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

More information about The Carter Center, including Center publications, press releases, and speeches, is available on the World Wide Web at: http://www.emory.edu/CARTER_CENTER.