

Andean Report by Mark Sonnenblick

Pérez wins Venezuelan elections

The socialist's hatred of everything military and his amity with Castro and Colombian narco-terrorists are a danger to regional security.

Carlos Andrés Pérez (CAP), once the vice president of the Socialist International, won Venezuela's presidential elections Dec. 4 with 54.56% of the vote. His main rival, the Social Christian Eduardo Fernández, won 41.74%.

Former terrorist Teodoro Petkof, of the Movement to Socialism (MAS), won only 2.72% of the vote.

Many voters were fed up with politicians who spent \$60 million on a campaign in a country with fewer people than New York City, without any serious debate on the country's incipient economic and political breakdown. The 20.3% rate of abstention, the highest in the past 25 years, was significant because, in Venezuela, voting is mandatory.

CAP's Democratic Action Party lost its congressional majority. In the Chamber of Deputies, it won only 43.76%. That gives it 98 deputies out of a total of 203 and 23 out of 49 senators. A congressional alliance will be required, but the big question is, with whom?

Many leaders of Democratic Action want to preserve the "Institutional Pact" by which it has shared power with the Social Christians for the past decades. CAP, however, responded, "What pact?" when asked about it Dec. 7. He would prefer to rule in alliance with the MAS ultra-leftists, who obtained 19 deputies and 3 senators. The Social Christians won 67 deputy and 22 senate seats. The "new right" party called New Democratic Generation took six deputy seats and one senato-

rial race. It, too, spent a lot of money and was played as "the great novelty" by the press.

The only one of the 45 parties which had a detailed program on how to deal with the foreign debt and develop the country's agricultural and industrial potential was the Venezuelan Labor Party (PLV). Its candidate, Alejandro Peña, had 1,500 of his ballots from the first 5% of the ballot boxes counted, but was only credited with a total of 2,600 votes at the end of the count. That suggests that the political mafias who run Venezuela decided that the PLV was too real a threat and began giving sewer service to its ballots.

There are signs that Fernández "threw" the election to Carlos Andrés Pérez by running only a half-hearted campaign. Fernández conceded defeat shortly after the polls closed. He congratulated "President-elect Sen. Carlos Andrés Pérez" and added, "Although the Supreme Electoral Council has only issued a partial vote count, I invite all Venezuelans to recognize the results."

CAP told an election day press conference he would begin "the reform of the political system," including creating a prime minister and holding state and local elections in mid-1989. He wants to renegotiate Venezuela's foreign debt under International Monetary Fund (IMF) conditions and firmly opposes declaring a debt moratorium.

CAP's longstanding friendship with Fidel Castro could turn Venezuela into a vital base for the irregular

warfare the communists are waging to seize control over the "Andean Spine." Cuba supports the M-19 and other narco-terrorist guerrilla groups in neighboring Colombia. These groups have begun crossing the border into Venezuela to gain funds by kidnaping ranchers and to get logistical support. The Venezuelan security forces are trying to thwart this expansion of irregular war. CAP opposes their efforts and would like to debilitate every military institution in Ibero-America.

This question came to a head Oct. 29 when Venezuelan police killed 16 subversives, some of them Colombians, near the border town of El Amparo. CAP initially claimed they were his "campaign workers," and still calls them "innocent fishermen." CAP has joined with the pro-terrorist left in a violent campaign against the Venezuelan military for its alleged excesses in these events. The most virulent agitator in this campaign has been Deputy Walter Márquez, a director of the Universal Christian Gnostic Church.

After the PLV and others put the heat on Walter Márquez for hiding two survivors of the El Amparo incident against whom there were arrest warrants and escorting them to the Mexican ambassador's residence in Caracas, Carlos Andrés Pérez denied that Márquez's behavior was criminal; it was just "a little heterodox" said the heterodox President-elect. Márquez could become part of CAP's government if it allies with his MAS party.

CAP seems blind to the truth stated by President Jaime Lusinchi, Nov. 25. The incumbent explained that Colombia has "a subversive problem, in which guerrillas and narcotics traffickers take part. . . . Some sectors in this Colombian internal confrontation are trying to internationalize that struggle, making our country one of their immediate targets."