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Military Authoritarianism and Political Change in Uruguay

by Howard Handelman

The militarization of Uruguayan politics represents a sharp break with the nation's democratic past. Despite economic stagnation and signs of disagreement within the armed forces, there is no reason to expect an early return to civilian rule.

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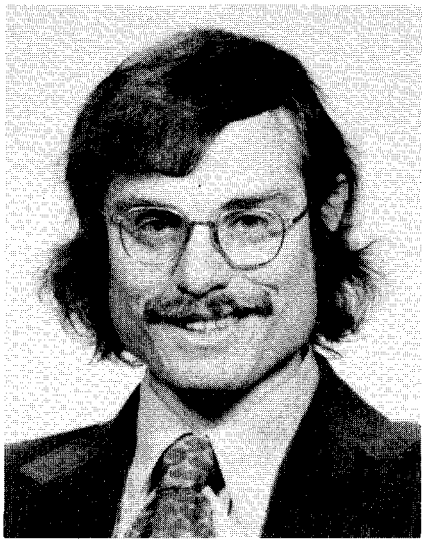
THE AUTHOR



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Nearly 20 years ago, political correspondent Tad Szulc wrote optimistically of the "twilight of the tyrants" in Latin America.[2] In the period immediately preceding publication of Szulc's book, military rulers had relinquished power to elected civilian governments in Argentina, Colombia, Peru, and Venezuela. By 1961 only one military dictatorship, Paraguay, remained in South America.[3] The inauguration of President John F. Kennedy's "Alliance for Progress" inspired the hope that socioeconomic reforms might buttress already existing political trends, accelerating and strengthening the development of democratic, civilian regimes in the hemisphere.

The promise of easy democratization, however, soon proved illusory. Increased political participation by peasants, the urban poor, and the industrial working class produced demands for economic redistribution and social justice in traditionally hierarchical societies. Not surprisingly, such demands were fiercely resisted by entrenched political and economic elites and, often, by an already satisfied middle class. From 1964 through 1973, Brazil, Argentina, Ecuador, Chile, and Uruguay all experienced conservative military coups.

Analysts of Latin American politics were forced to abandon the optimism of the early 1960s and to focus their attention on the harsher realities of "corporatism" and "authoritarianism." They began to describe the "bureaucratic-authoritarian model,"[4] identifying as characteristic of most of the new military regimes their efforts to suspend earlier expansion of mass political participation; repression of labor unions, peasant associations, and other organizations expressing mass-based economic and political demands; suspension of political party activity; placing of political and economic decision-making in the hands of military and civilian technocrats, rather than politicians (most of whom the military holds in contempt); heavy reliance on foreign investment as the basis of economic growth; implementation of conservative economic policies often drawn from Milton Friedman and other "Chicago School" economists; and enforcement of economic austerity programs whose burdens fall most heavily on the shoulders of the urban working class, often sharply reducing their real income. Clearly such policies were extremely unpopular among large setments of the population and could often only be implemented through the suppression of basic civil liberties, the arrest of political dissidents, and, ultimately, the use of torture and other repressive techniques.[5]

Of all the South American nations fitting this bureaucratic-authoritarian pattern, Uruguay presents one of the most sobering pictures. Throughout most of the twentieth century this nation ranked with Chile as the most stable democracy in Latin America. Indeed, a series of polls conducted from 1945 through the mid-1960s among experts on Latin American politics consistently ranked Uruguay as the most democratic nation in that region.[6] Yet Uruguay today, like Chile, has become a symbol of political repression and military dictatorship.

The militarization of Uruguayan politics represents a sharp break from a long armed forces tradition of nonintervention in the nation's political affairs. During the twentieth century, only once had the country been subjected to dictatorial rule (1933-1938). Even then, power was seized by an elected civilian president (Gabriel Terra) whose backing came not from the military but from the police. During the 1960s, when Uruguay's leading scholars published the *Enciclopedia Uruguaya*, a series of monographs analyzing the country's political and economic structure, they failed to include a section on the armed forces. Carlos Real de Azua, the nation's foremost historian, noted that, owing to its traditionally minor role in national politics and society, virtually nothing had been written on the Uruguayan military.[7]

Uruguay's current military regime has significance in two respects. First, it illustrates the possibility of military authoritarianism in even the most apparently well-entrenched democracies. And, second, the Uruguayan armed forces differ in many ways from their counterparts in Chile or Argentina, and contradict several stereotypes of Latin American military rule. The following *Report* reviews briefly the origins of

Uruguay's military government, discusses its development since 1973, and analyzes possible future trends.

The Fall of Uruguayan Democracy

While all Latin American nations are undoubtedly "atypical" of the region in some way, Uruguay particularly violates almost all the stereotyped images of socioeconomic and political underdevelopment. The economic base of Uruguayan development was forged during the nineteenth century when the nation's sparsely populated countryside was converted into rich sheep and cattle ranches. Subsequently, in the closing decades of that century, a wave of Spanish and Italian immigrants flooded into Montevideo, the capital, and other urban areas. Those immigrants gave the country a population that was ethnically European, urban (80%), skilled, heavily middle class (40% to 60%), and literate (over 90%).

Early in the twentieth century, José Batlle y Ordoñez, Uruguay's most outstanding political leader, coalesced the urban middle and working classes behind his reformist Colorado Party. Using revenues from the country's vast wool and meat exports, Batlle and his successors created a welfare state featuring extensive medical care, free public education through the university level, government-generated employment, and a generous (if not excessive) pension system. To be sure, the country's rural wealth was left in the hands of a small but powerful ranching aristocracy, areas of serious poverty remained in the urban slums and countryside, and the rural poor were excluded from the welfare state's benefits. Through the middle of this century, however, most Uruguayans enjoyed the highest standard of living in Latin America, a level comparable to that of Western Europe.[8]

Economic development was accompanied by an impressive record of political stability and democracy. With a small, depoliticized armed forces, the nation escaped the cycle of coups endemic to most of South America. Through 60 years of nearly uninterrupted democratic, civilian government, Uruguayans enjoyed an extraordinarily high level of civil liberties. To foreign observers and Uruguayans alike, the country came to be known as "the Switzerland of Latin America."

Expanding world demand for meat and wool during the Korean War produced the last of Uruguay's economic booms, and the war's end ushered in two decades of economic stagnation. The failure of the nation's rural elite to modernize their ranches, an overly protected and inefficient industrial sector, declining world demand for wool, and a greatly overbloated bureaucracy, all contributed to a downward economic spiral. From 1954 to 1972 the country's Gross National Product (GNP) declined 12 percent—making Uruguay one of the few countries in the world to experience "negative economic growth." Economic decay was marked by rising unemployment and staggering inflation rates of 60 to 135 percent annually during the 1960s.

These economic pressures rapidly destroyed the nation's delicate social equilibrium and precipitated a rising level of class conflict. Beleaguered workers, faced with declining living standards, turned to militant trade unionism. From the mid-1960s onward, the country was wracked with continual strikes, lockouts, and other forms of labor-management conflict. Growing government inefficiency and corruption further exacerbated the situation.

Out of this background of economic and political decay emerged the National Liberation Movement, a skilled group of urban guerrillas better known as the Tupamaros. Disillusioned by the government's failure to enact meaningful reforms, the "Tupas" insisted that armed struggle was the only means of breaking the deadlock of Uruguayan democracy. Ironically, most of the guerrillas were not drawn from the poorest classes, but were, instead, generally the children of the urban elite and middle class. Their daring activities and exposés of government corruption elicited a surprising level of sympathy from Montevideo's disenchanted middle and working classes.

As Uruguay became increasingly polarized—workers against employers, Tupamaros against police—the ruling Colorado Party moved sharply to the right of its usual reformist stance. Colorado Presidents Jorge Pacheco Areco (1967-1971) and Juan María Bordaberry (1971-1976)—backed by the military—responded to the growing unrest by imposing a series of restrictions on traditional civil liberties. Under an almost continual "state of siege," strikes were repressed, radical union leaders were imprisoned, and freedom of the press was restricted.

Opposition to these measures was centered in the Congress, particularly from two sources: first, the traditionally conservative, rural-based, opposition party, the Blancos, now led by liberal Senator Wilson Ferreira Aldunate, a staunch defender of civil liberties; and, second, a newly formed coalition of Christian Democrats, disaffected Colorados, Socialists, Communists, and other left-of-center parties, called the Frente Amplio (Broad Front).

With the police totally incapable of controlling the Tupamaros and other political unrest, the size and budget of the nation's armed forces increased dramatically. While the ultimate size of the military—23,000 men—was not large, the armed forces were supplemented by some 20,000 paramilitary (state police, etc.), largely committed to internal security. Given the country's small population (less than three million), the combined military and paramilitary force as a percentage of the population made it the second highest in Latin America. Between 1968 and 1973 the armed forces' share of the national budget rose from 13.9 to 26.2 percent. While the exact size of the current military budget is unknown (even to the U.S. Embassy's economic and military sections), it is believed to constitute 40-50 percent of government expen-

ditures. Within South America, Uruguay and Peru currently devote the highest percentage of their GNPs to military outlays.[9]

By 1972, the combination of increased military might and exceptional powers assumed by the government turned the tide against the urban guerrillas. From May through November of that year, an all-out war, featuring mass arrests and the torture of guerrilla suspects, broke the back of the Tupamaro movement. Yet the success of the anti-guerrilla campaign failed to bring a corresponding reduction in government repression. To the contrary, strong military pressure induced Congress to pass a draconian "Public Order Law" and to extend the "state of internal war." The movement toward military authoritarianism had achieved a momentum of its own, divorced from the campaign against the Tupamaros. Disgusted with the civilian leadership's apparent ineptitude, the colonels and generals became increasingly politicized.

As the military moved toward center stage in the political arena, the more astute officers created institutions to facilitate their involvement in the decision-making process. In 1971, General Gregorio Alvarez, the army's most ambitious and articulate commander, organized and led the Supreme Military Command (ESMACO). Composed of 22 officers drawn from all the services, ESMACO gradually became the central political and economic planning board for the armed forces.

At first the generals pressured Congress on behalf of repressive measures requested by Presidents Pacheco and Bordaberry. Later, as they established control over the guerrillas and, thereby, increased their own prestige, they challenged the executive branch as well. While President Pacheco had been fairly adept at controlling his generals, Bordaberry found himself more hard-pressed. Conflict centered in two areas: civilian political corruption and military torturing of political suspects.

During the 1960s the nation's political leaders—once respected for their high level of honesty—had become tainted by currency speculation, smuggling, and other illegal activities.[10] In 1971, the large "Mercantile Bank," headed by the brother of President Pacheco's close political adviser and Foreign Minister, Jorge Peirano, collapsed in a major financial scandal. Peirano himself was forced to resign. Some officers saw the corruption issue as a convenient wedge for weakening civilian authority. Others, including air force captains investigating illegal currency transactions, were genuinely shocked by what they found. Ironically, some of their most explosive information came from Tupamaro captives who sought to justify their revolutionary position by furnishing their military captors with proof of government corruption. In October 1972, as the captains' investigations moved toward high-ranking Colorado politicians, the officers defied President Bordaberry's orders to terminate their investigation and turn over their evidence to civilian authorities.

Conversely, the armed forces were equally sensitive about congressional investigations into mistreatment of political prisoners. In October 1970, congressional criticism intensified when three doctors, arrested by the military security forces as Tupamaros, publicly testified that they had been tortured. While there is little reason to believe that Bordaberry objected to such practices, the combination of congressional pressures and an opportunity to assert his authority over the military led him to demand the doctors' release. Once again he was defied by his generals.

The confrontation between President Bordaberry and the armed forces reached a climax in February 1973. Again the conflict centered on military investigations of political corruption. When the President sought to strengthen his position by appointing a new defense minister, the commanders in chief refused to recognize the new minister's authority. The army and air force seized radio and television stations to broadcast attacks on government corruption. Only the navy's loyalty to constitutional order prevented the army and the air force from ousting Bordaberry at that point.

As the price for retaining office, however, President Bordaberry was forced to accept a list of military demands. Known as Communiqués 4 and 7, the demands called for land redistribution, the elimination of corruption, and other reforms. Bordaberry also conceded that the armed forces would "oversee the running of the country in close contact with the executive" and would combat political ideas that were "incompatible with the people's traditions and ideals." A National Security Council (COSENA) was created to review all important government decisions. Although officially a civilian-military body, COSENA was dominated by its military component. "Bitter February," as these events came to be known, established unquestioned military dominance—through ESMACO and COSENA—over both the executive and the legislative branches. From that point on, civilian authorities served at the generals' pleasure.

Subsequent events were almost anticlimatic. On June 27, 1973, the last vestiges of civilian democracy came to an end when President Bordaberry, in close collaboration with the armed forces, dissolved Congress. That act was soon followed by the prohibition of political party activity, the dissolution of all political parties in the Frente Amplio, total repression of the opposition press, the destruction of the National Labor Congress (the CNT), and the arrest of left-of-center political and union leaders. The last voices of effective political opposition had been stilled.

Political Thought among the Military

While the march toward military control was apparent at least five months before the June "presidential coup," the political outlook of Uruguay's new military rulers was far less clear, although at least three tendencies could be distinguished: the

"legalists," the "hard-liners," and the "populists." In fact, the lines between the groups were not always distinct; some officers seemed to overlap in two, even three, groups, or to jump from one to another. The fuzziness of many officers' political ideas simply defied categorization.

The first faction, the legalists, were definitely on the wane in the months preceding the June coup. Concentrated in the navy, these officers were committed to maintaining some semblance of civilian rule. The armed forces would serve as watchdogs against subversion and corruption rather than govern directly. In November 1972, naval troops had taken to Montevideo's streets to prevent President Bordaberry's ouster by the other military branches.

At first glance, the virtual military takeover in June seemed to signal the legalists' defeat. Yet, backed by the long Uruguayan tradition of civilian rule, this faction was partially responsible for preventing a full-scale coup. Unlike Argentina, Brazil, and Chile—where the military removed elected civilian presidents from office—in Uruguay, President Bordaberry remained in office after he (not the military) had dissolved Congress. Both Bordaberry and the generals insisted that the President had acted within the emergency powers granted him by the constitution. Furthermore, they vaguely suggested that presidential elections of some type would be held on schedule when Bordaberry's legal term of office expired in November 1976.

Arrayed against the legalists were two interventionist groups centered in the army. The hard-line or "Brazilianist" faction subscribed most closely to the bureaucratic-authoritarian model described earlier in this *Report*. Led by General Esteban Cristi, commander of the critical first military region (which includes Montevideo), these ultra-right-wing officers were committed to destroying all vestiges of "subversion" in the nation's political, economic, educational, and cultural life. They were (and still are) obsessed with the dangers of the "international communist conspiracy" within which they included progressive priests, most intellectuals, liberal politicians, Amnesty International and, more recently, Senator Edward Kennedy and President Carter. Unlike either the legalists or the populists, the hard-liners cared little about garnering public support. On reading their official pronouncements, one is reminded of the opening scene of Costa Gravis' film, "Z," in which Greek officers receive a lecture about the need for fanatical vigilance in rooting out the persistent "weeds" of subversion from the healthy garden of society.

Beyond its concern for internal order and security, the Cristi faction lacked a well-defined program or ideology. Overall, its members tended to favor the Brazilian model of economic development based on linkages with foreign investment and technocratic decision-making conducted without concern for public opinion or for the adverse effects some decisions might have on the population.

The third of Uruguay's military factions is the most perplexing. The populists—"Peruvianists" (*peruanistas*), or nationalists—were led by General Gregorio Alvarez (then Head of the Fourth Military District and since February 1978, Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces). This group loosely adopted its ideology from the nationalist, reformist generals who have ruled Peru since 1968. Alvarez and the populists seemed to feel that the only long-term solution to Uruguay's economic stagnation, labor unrest, and guerrilla subversion was a series of social reforms. In the months preceding the June coup, they issued several pronouncements (including Communiqués number 4 and 7) calling for land reform, full employment, stimulation of exports, reduction of the foreign debt, and elimination of government corruption.

In their campaign against corruption, these alleged reformers seemed to be giving proof of their sincere intentions. The arrest of Jorge Batlle, an important Colorado Party leader closely allied with Montevideo's industrial barons, and the detention of several politicians, industrialists, and landowners, suggested to some Uruguayan leftists that the populists shared their own antipathy toward the nation's economic and political elite. Indeed, there was a sense of antagonism and mutual disdain between many officers (who frequently came from rural, lower-middle-class backgrounds) and the landed aristocracy.[11]

While the Peruvianists were a minority within the officer corps, they compensated for their small numbers by having greater ability. Most Uruguayans with whom I spoke viewed Gregorio Alvarez as the most articulate, intelligent, and persuasive of the generals. Through the institution which he created, ESMACO, he exercised considerable influence over military policy on economic issues. His ally, General Abdón Raimúndez—later to head the central bank—was also a key economic strategist. Other populists like Colonel Carlos Trabal, head of military intelligence, were among the army's more politically astute officers.[12]

In the early days of 1973, then, as Uruguay moved steadily toward military rule, portions of the nation's left viewed developments with considerable equanimity. Members of the Communist Party and some Socialists and Christian Democrats felt that Alvarez's "Peruvianist" faction was on the ascent and that it was a group with which they could deal. Montevideo's active rumor mill indicated that a dialogue had been established between captured Tupamaros and young populist officers of the military intelligence. Allegedly, these officers were impressed and deeply concerned with their guerrilla prisoners' revelations about corruption in national politics. Thus, when the June 27 coup was followed by a general strike, a few communist leaders within the CNT urged their followers to return to their jobs so that an accommodation could be reached with progressive elements of the armed forces.

In the weeks following the closing of Congress, however, such hopes were soon dashed. On July 2, the CNT was dissolved. Hundreds of CNT and Frente Amplio leaders were arrested. Shortly thereafter, a government decree permitted public and private employers summarily to dismiss without compensation any worker who continued to support the general strike. Many large corporations, such as FUNSA (Uruguay's largest firm, manufacturing tires, auto batteries, etc.) and General Electric, used the decree as a pretext for firing many union activists. Since 1973 the right to strike or bargain collectively has been terminated and unionization has been virtually eliminated.

Among all the reforms called for in the military's progressive pre-coup communiqués, in only one area—elimination of civilian political corruption—has the military made the slightest effort. But whatever progress has been made in that area has been negated by legal and illegal "rakeoffs" by military officers coupled with huge increases in military salaries, pensions, and fringe benefits.

The Uruguayan populists' program and ideology had never, in fact, been as well formulated as that of the Peruvian officers with whom they were being compared.[13] Communiques number 4 and 7 were vaguely worded and full of contradictions. Moreover, what many Uruguayan leftists had failed to realize was that, whatever their reformist aspirations, the populists shared the hard-liners fanatic hostility toward the left. General Alvarez himself had seen his brother killed by the Tupamaros and was second to none in his torture of suspected guerrillas and union activists under his jurisdiction. Moreover, while the populist officers were more politically astute and aggressive, General Cristi and the hard-liners controlled more troops and fire power. Once in power, the opposing hard-line and Peruvianist factions seemed to compromise their differences over economic and social policy, with most proposed populist reforms falling by the wayside.

The Generals in Power

The dissolution of Congress formally marked the end of Uruguayan democracy, but the officers who commanded the armed forces were not prepared to assume full responsibility for governing the nation. The legalist faction and other officers, recognizing that direct military government usually leads to divisiveness within the armed forces, hesitated. For the Uruguayan military, with no clearly defined leader, the danger was very real. In addition, the country faced a difficult and uncertain economic future. Because unpopular decisions and unforeseen difficulties could only hurt its image and lower its legitimacy, the armed forces preferred civilian "front men" to take the responsibility.[14]

More important, unlike their counterparts in Argentina, Peru, and other South American nations, the Uruguayan military command had virtually no political experience. Most officers came from lower-middle-class, rural backgrounds and had limited educations. A friend of mine who had taught briefly at the Uruguayan Air Force Academy was shocked by its low academic standards. The officers were well aware that they lacked the technical training available to the graduates of Brazil's Superior War College or Peru's Center for Higher Military Studies (CAEM). Consequently, even the most interventionist military men were prepared to leave the foreign service and the economics ministry to civilian experts.

The civilian-military coalition that governed following the June "presidential coup," however, was clearly dominated by the military. Juan María Bordaberry, the legally elected civilian president, remained in office. Congress was dissolved and eventually replaced by a 25-member civilian body (appointed by the President) called the Council of State (Consejo del Estado). Council members were primarily drawn from the far right of the two "traditional" (i.e., nonleft) political parties, the Blancos and Colorados. While this new legislative branch merely rubber-stamped decisions made by the executive and the military, it did symbolically represent the civilian influence.

The most important instrument of remaining civilian influence was the Cabinet. All ministerial positions, with the exception of the interior ministry—charged with the maintenance of internal security—continued in civilian hands. No junta of the kind found in Chile or Peru was ever established. Indeed, the current Uruguayan regime does not officially admit that a coup took place in 1973 and refers merely to the dissolution of Congress. This "line" sometimes proves difficult to maintain, however, as in 1976, when a powerful army colonel in the labor ministry spoke to me of the "1973 coup."

Raising my eyebrows with feigned surprise, I asked, "Did you say a 'coup'?"

"Oh yes," he replied, "I guess we never use that word, but you and I know what it was."

Yet the distinction is not merely semantic. During the past five years the Uruguayan armed forces have continued to increase their power while insisting on maintaining the fine line between military domination and military rule.

In the months following President Bordaberry's dissolution of Congress, the generals moved against all potential sources of opposition within Uruguayan society. Step by step, the government's internal security apparatus suppressed all institutions that had housed any substantial leftist political sentiment; the parties of the Frente Amplio, the unions, the high schools and universities, and the press were all purged. Periods of calm were (and still are) interrupted by waves of arrests. By mid-1976, Amnesty International estimated that over 50,000 people—one of every 30 adult Uruguayans—had suffered interrogation or imprisonment of varying duration. This gave Uruguay the dubious distinction of having the highest proportion of political detainees in the world.

While most people picked up by the security forces are "only" held for a few days or weeks, families and friends can never be sure whether the incarceration will be short or long. Approximately 6,000 political prisoners have been brought before military tribunals—in Uruguay all political suspects are subject to military "justice"—and sentenced to extended terms. Initially, suspected Tupamaros and CNT labor officials were singled out for the longest sentences. In recent years, former Communist Party members have been subjected to the most intense repression. Tortures of the most heinous kind are routinely used on political prisoners and suspects. Approximately 40 to 50 persons have died during interrogation.

In some areas, however, the military has exercised a curious mix of hard-line and populist policies. This is most vividly demonstrated in the field of labor-management relations. Having destroyed the National Labor Congress and denied Uruguayan workers the right to strike or bargain collectively, the armed forces sought some mechanism for protecting workers' rights. In the wake of the mass dismissals that followed the coup, the officers (or, at least, their populist wing) established the ESMACO Labor Office to enforce minimum wage levels and industrial health and safety codes, protect workers against arbitrary dismissal, and investigate individual worker complaints.

To many observers' surprise, the Labor Office has gone about its task with a great deal of energy and has offered workers some degree of protection. I know personally of one case where the colonel heading the Labor Office responded to an anonymous tip that a large firm was not paying the legal minimum wage. He arrested the company's president that same day. Workers in larger companies do occasionally lodge complaints against their employer with the Labor Office and sometimes receive satisfaction. But the office also clearly shows the limits of the military's populist ideology. Workers in small plants, who cannot readily send in anonymous complaints against their employer are unlikely to "cause trouble." When I interviewed the chief of the Labor Office, he seemed to be rather unsophisticated regarding labor-management problems, seeing his main function as guaranteeing the workers clean bathrooms and cafeterias. Finally, the minimum wage levels decreed by the Ministry of Finance—even when enforced by ESMACO—have fallen far behind the cost of living and workers' real incomes have fallen over 30 percent since the coup. In short, military populism, such as it is, has proved to be no substitute for unions in protecting workers' rights and incomes.

Having silenced potential opposition *outside* the government, the generals next sought firmer control over the civilian component within their regime. In every important government agency and every ministry (save one), they placed an officer, usually a colonel, at the second or third highest position in the administrative hierarchy. Given the Uruguayan military's lack of political and administrative experience, this was a convenient means of training officers for assuming greater future responsibility. In addition the colonels and majors served as ESMACO's eyes and ears, "keeping tab," on their civilian superiors.

By 1974 the military was in control of most areas of public decision-making. Only two civilian officials retained enough power to challenge total military dominance. The first was President Bordaberry himself. Essentially Bordaberry represented two political power bases: the Colorado Party's right wing and the nation's large, rural landowners. He had no qualms about the authoritarian measures which the military had introduced. In fact, he exceeded most officers in his zeal for political repression. Bordaberry, however, wished to maintain his presidential powers independent of the armed forces and he hoped eventually to reassert his control over the military. Despite total media censorship, politically "tuned in" Montevideans knew of several policy clashes between the President and his generals. In May 1975, for example, he tried to remove a civilian favorite of General Alvarez from the powerful, government meat board. Shortly thereafter, Bordaberry came into conflict with General Abdón Raimúndez, head of the nation's central bank, in his attempt to raise the price of meat paid by the slaughterhouses to the nation's ranchers.

The President greatly overestimated his power base. Even with the support of the rural aristocracy he was no match for the military. In each of his open confrontations he was forced to back down. Indeed, the only factors preventing the armed forces from removing him from office were the lack of a clearly defined reason for ousting him and internal divisions within the military.

In December 1975, however, as Bordaberry approached his last constitutional year in office, he overstepped his bounds. In a "secret" memorandum circulated among high-ranking civilian and military officials, the President called for the banning of all remaining political parties, cancellation of the 1976 elections, return of the colonels in the ministries to a more distant "watchdog" position, and the creation of a new single-party corporatist state with Bordaberry at its head. The memorandum, with its shrill, classically-fascist tone, alienated virtually all the politicized sectors of the civilian population, including most of Bordaberry's cabinet.[15]

The President undoubtedly expected his memorandum's tribute to the armed forces' role in "saving the country's honor," to win their favor. Instead, his suggestion for limiting the military's role in politics not only antagonized hard-line officers but his proposals' totally "unpolitical," insensitive tone also offended the moderates. On June 12, 1976—almost a year to the day from his dissolution of Congress—Bordaberry was removed from office. He returned to private life where he

quickly became a "nonperson," never mentioned by the Uruguayan mass media. After a two-months interim with the government in the hands of an 80-year-old president, Aparicio Mendes, a 72-year-old right-wing law professor, was named President. Mendes was keenly aware that he served at the military's pleasure. It is said that since October 1976 (after the U.S. Congress cut off military aid to Uruguay), when the President made an intemperate speech accusing the U.S. Democratic Party of being an arm of international communism, Mendes allegedly "cannot talk to anybody but his wife without an officer at his side."

A far more formidable challenge to military dominance than Bordaberry's was posed by another civilian political leader, Finance Minister Alejandro Vegh Villegas. A brilliant and articulate Harvard-trained economist, Vegh ranks with General Alvarez as the most powerful personality to emerge since the 1973 coup. If Alvarez represents the military's nationalist wing—suspicious of foreign investment and of the international economic and diplomatic community—Vegh is the consummate multinational. Born in Brussels and educated in the United States, he speaks fluent Spanish, French, and English. In earlier years he served as an economic adviser to authoritarian military regimes in Argentina and Brazil. His close links with the Uruguayan banking community, Argentine and Brazilian banks, multinational corporations, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the U.S. Embassy, made him the only civilian in the government capable of standing up to the generals. Thus, Vegh Villegas was the only Cabinet member without an ESMACO officer in his ministry. When I asked a friend of Vegh's at the American Embassy why this was so, he replied, "Oh, Alejandro simply refused to allow one."

Basically Vegh pursued a series of economic policies consistent with Milton Friedman's laissez-faire philosophy and with the IMF's desire to control inflation. His programs paralleled those already in force in Brazil and Chile and subsequently introduced to Argentina: reducing corporate taxes, encouraging foreign investment, removing restrictions on imports, reducing government spending on welfare measures (but not on the military), and introducing wage controls that severely cut the real income of the urban working class.

Many of these policies conflicted with the goals of the military's populist wing. Generals Alvarez and Raimundez in particular saw themselves as the protectors of workers' jobs and salaries (apparently seeing no contradiction between that self-image and the military's imprisonment and torture of union leaders). On several occasions they vetoed Vegh's plans to dismiss large numbers of government employees.[16] Similarly, in an effort to preserve jobs and foster Uruguayan national industries, the populists were far more inclined than Vegh Villegas to maintain protectionist policies. In 1976, when the Finance Minister suggested facilitating the importation of automobiles—a policy that would have soon destroyed the country's small and inefficient auto assembly industry—he was checked once again by the generals. Finally, the populists moderated Vegh's wage control policy so as to soften the decline in workers' living standards. Ironically, the military populists were more concerned with maintaining some degree of popular legitimacy than was Vegh Villegas. In this respect, the Uruguayan military has differed sharply from their Argentine and Chilean counterparts who have given the civilian, "Chicago School" technocrats a far freer hand and have facilitated more drastic reductions in employment and real income.

If Vegh's harsh economic policies brought him into conflict with the populists, his more liberal political policies antagonized General Cristi and the hard-liners. When President Bordaberry circulated his aforementioned memorandum advocating the abolition of existing political parties and the creation of a corporatist state, Vegh was the most outspoken Cabinet Minister in his opposition. In his own counter-memorandum, he argued that the best way to prevent the resurgence of "Marxist subversion" was to allow a gradual return to party politics and some limited form of democracy. Vegh's record of service for authoritarian military regimes in three different countries suggests that he is no Jeffersonian democrat. As an intelligent pragmatist, however, he recognized the need for some movement toward democracy (if only a cosmetic one) to stifle internal and international criticism of the regime. His position was strongly backed by the American Embassy.

The extent of disagreement between the Finance Minister and the generals should not be exaggerated. Vegh insisted to me that the foreign press had overemphasized areas of policy difference and neglected broad areas of agreement. But given his supporters within and, more important, outside Uruguay, Vegh Villegas could far more successfully challenge the military than could Bordaberry. On a number of occasions the military forced the Finance Minister to modify his policies, yet, at other times, Vegh felt sufficiently strongly that he threatened to resign unless he could have his way. In August 1975, for example, he announced his resignation after the military sought to overturn the terms of a debt refinancing agreement that he had negotiated with the IMF. On that occasion, and several others, the generals backed down.

The delicate two-year accommodation between Vegh Villegas and the military came to an end in August 1976—less than two months after Bordaberry's removal. The source of conflict this time was not economic but political. Vegh strongly objected to a decree (Decree number 3) stripping most middle-of-the-road political leaders, including some of the Finance Minister's close associates, of their political rights. Once again Vegh tendered his resignation. This time it was accepted. But, unlike

Bordaberry, Vegh Villegas was not relegated to political oblivion. He was appointed to the nation's new legislative body, the Consejo de la Nacion, and continued to influence economic policy through the new Finance Minister, one of his own disciples.

The Uncertain Future

In a variety of ways, 1976 marked a major watershed for Uruguay's military regime. With President Bordaberry's removal and Vegh Villegas's resignation, the generals faced no serious civilian competition for power. In addition, two institutional changes signed into law by the newly inaugurated President, Aparicio Mendes, further consolidated armed forces control.

First, the nation's quasi-legislative branch, the Council of State, was replaced by the Council of the Nation (Consejo de la Nacion). The new body is composed of the previous 25-person Council (with some personnel changes) and the 22 members of the Supreme Military Command (ESMACO), thus converting a purely civilian legislature into a body nearly half military. Second, under the terms of Decree number 3, almost all the people elected to Congress in 1971 were prohibited from holding public office for at least 15 years.[17] Finally, General Julio Cesar Vadora, Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces, dropped the remaining shoe by announcing that the newly "elected" President and Council of the Nation would serve until 1981. At that time, Vadora declared, presidential elections would be held, but with only a *single* candidate who would have to be satisfactory to the military! Should the "battle against subversion" and the restoration of the nation's economy continue to go well, said the general, the 1986 presidential election would involve two candidates.

Vadora's announcement and the promulgation of Decree number 3 drove a sharp wedge between the military and the leading civilian Cabinet members. Sources close to Finance Minister Vegh Villegas told me that the Foreign Minister and the Agricultural Minister had both wished to resign in protest with Vegh, but had backed down under military pressure. The developments were also a blow to the many Uruguayans who had recently seen hopeful signs of a quicker return to some form of limited democracy. The public attacks that the military had leveled at Bordaberry's "anti-democratic memorandum" (words used by the generals) earlier in the year, and the President's subsequent dismissal, had raised hopes that the military's legalist and populist factions were about to return the country to civilian democracy. Bordaberry's legal term of office ended in 1976. The armed forces had summarily rejected his suggestion that his term be extended indefinitely. Alejandro Vegh Villegas, with the American Embassy backing, had urged the military high command to allow a contested presidential election in 1976 between two moderate (i.e., nonleftist) candidates. Following Bordaberry's removal, rumors filled Montevideo that Vegh would soon be appointed interim president until the elections. Now all these hopes were dashed. The hard-liners seemed in control and they showed no willingness to make concessions.

Despite their consolidation of power, however, the military's position was shakier than it had ever been. At the center of their problems was the nation's poor economic performance. The generals had seized power in 1973 just as the European Economic Community (EEC—Uruguay's primary export market) was about to terminate meat imports. After two disastrous years (1974-75), in which Brazil had become Uruguay's chief market, the volume of meat exports rose sharply in 1976. But the world price per ton was still far lower than it had been in 1973. With the tripling of the country's petroleum import bill (Uruguay has no hydrocarbon energy), the trade deficit was still staggering. Vegh's economic policies had lowered inflation to an annual rate of "only" 40 percent and had stimulated nontraditional exports (i.e., products other than meat and wool). Anticipated foreign investment had nevertheless failed to materialize, the national debt—fed by excessive military spending—cotinued to rise steadily, the GNP was growing less than one percent annually, and domestic purchasing power was so low that the business community's complaints were clearly audible.

The departure of Alejandro Vegh Villegas had removed the military's most competent technocrat and cut off their primary link to the national and international business communities. Starting on the left and moving toward the center, the generals had isolated themselves from virtually all the nation's civilian political leaders. In August they had destroyed what little credibility they had by accusing exiled Blanco leader Wilson Ferreira Aldunate of being a subversive in league with guerrillas. Ferreira, a member of the nation's landed elite, had run a liberal, reformist campaign in the 1971 presidential election and had amassed the largest number of votes of any candidate in Uruguayan history.[18] The constant announcements of new arrests, the destruction of a once-flourishing press (newspaper circulation in 1976 was less than half that in 1972), stories of inflated military salaries and fringe benefits, and the "grapevine" reports of torture, had all stripped the military of public support.

If the domestic situation was not bright, the external picture was even bleaker. Uruguay had come to rank with Chile as an international symbol of repression and torture in the Americas. Amnesty International, a group viewed by the Uruguayan military as the anti-Christ incarnate, had mounted a worldwide campaign on behalf of Uruguayan political prisoners. In September the United States Congress terminated military aid to Uruguay because of human rights violations. At the time Uruguay and Chile were the only South American countries to have suffered such censure.[19] The election of Jimmy Carter in November, with his strong commitment to

human rights, brought gloom to Uruguayan government authorities. Thus, at the very time they had consolidated their power to its highest point, the military were more isolated than they had ever been since the 1973 coup.

Since President Carter's inauguration, external pressures on the Uruguayan regime have intensified. The American Embassy, once a source of "aid and comfort," has become a lobbyist for the restoration of civil liberties and of elected civilian government. A series of emissaries from the United States, including a Pentagon delegation, have tried to convince the apparently uncomprehending Uruguayan hard-liners that President Carter and the Congress will not restore aid until progress is made toward the restoration of democratic norms. The Organization of American States (OAS), with the United States and Venezuela in the lead, has also intensified pressures on the Uruguayan regime.

Even the government's erstwhile allies have not given the military much support. In late 1976 the military journal *El Soldado* ("The Soldier") proposed that the country join Argentina, Chile, Brazil, Bolivia, and Paraguay in a joint effort to resist "pressure groups that wish to use United States influence against us." In effect, the article was calling for an alliance of right-wing, neofascist states to protect bureaucratic-authoritarian regimes along South America's lower tier. In May 1977 the foreign ministers of Argentina and Brazil indicated that their countries were not interested in such an alliance. The Brazilians in particular wanted to disassociate their government from the more internationally censured regimes of Uruguay, Paraguay, and Chile.

Within Uruguay the situation has also continued to deteriorate. The 1977 inflation rate of 70 percent (up sharply from the previous year) and unemployment of nearly 13 percent (augmented by extensive underemployment) belie the regime's promises of economic recovery and intensify popular discontent. Finance Minister Arismendi announced a record balance of payments deficit for 1977 and declared "debt is devouring this nation." According to the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), Uruguay now holds the heaviest short-term debt obligations (as a percentage of trade and GNP) of any Latin American nation. The EEC's decision at the end of 1977 to once again terminate imports of meat from Uruguay and Argentina put further pressure on the economy.

Not surprisingly, even previously quiescent Uruguayan voices have initiated criticism of the military regime during the past 18 months. The long-dormant press has sharply attacked President Mendes (apparently with clearance from military censors), though they have not dared to criticize the military directly. In February 1977, the right-wing Montevideo daily *El País*, previously a strong government supporter, called for an end to press censorship. Subsequently, both *El País* and the conservative weekly *Búsqueda* (closely tied to Alejandro Vegh Villegas and the business community) have been shut down for varying lengths of time because they had printed articles unacceptable to the government.

Criticism and pressure have also mounted from middle-of-the-road Blanco and Colorado Party leaders—the only two parties that still exist legally. In April 1977, officials of the two parties allegedly met secretly outside Montevideo. They apparently branded the present government illegal (a position that most Colorados had not previously taken) and lauded the pressures being exerted on the regime by the Carter administration. Several months later Colorado leader Jorge Batlle called for an alliance with the Blancos to work for the restoration of civil liberties. Meanwhile, in Caracas, Venezuela, exiled Blanco leader Wilson Ferreira, undoubtedly the nation's most popular political figure, announced an exile coalition with the leftist parties of the Frente Amplio. As the clamor for change mounted, there were rumors in Montevideo throughout 1977 of an imminent transfer of power to a civilian-military transition government, to be followed by democratic elections in 1978. Such predictions were, at the very least, premature.

Faced with mounting internal and international criticism, the military regime seemed to have two options: an orderly return to the barracks, preserving as much "military honor" as possible; or greater repression and a hardening of the lines. The government response has tried to combine both strategies.

With rare exception, the military has made no concessions to international pressures in the areas of human rights and basic civil liberties. On the contrary, a siege mentality has seemingly produced a more repressive offensive.[20] Press censorship has been formalized in the hands of the military's National Office of Presidential Public Relations (DINARP). Under the terms of legislation passed late in 1976, the media may be prevented from printing news that "might harm the external [foreign] image of the government." Even the president must have all his statements cleared by ESMACO. A "Brazilian style" judiciary act passed last year removed the executive branch (including the interior ministry and other internal security agencies) from review by the courts, which are now controlled by the newly formed Ministry of Justice. *El Día*, Montevideo's most independent daily, has editorially lamented, "the judiciary is dead." And, under the terms of the new "Law of a State of Emergency," Uruguayans may be imprisoned for holding "antigovernment ideas" even if those ideas produce no concrete action or even written manifestation.

There is a note of desperation and increased fanaticism in the generals' public pronouncements. When asked at news conferences to comment on the state of the economy, ESMACO spokesmen prefer to talk about "combating moral decay, loss

of faith in human values, and the breaking of the principles of authority...." There is also frequent rhetoric about the need for "civic purification," correcting "false thinking" planted in the people's minds by years of Marxist infiltration into the educational and cultural systems, and the need to cleanse the nation of two generations of corrupt politicians. Nor is this hardening position restricted to rhetoric. In mid-1977 and in the early months of 1978, new waves of arrests swept the country.

But there were also clear signs of dissent within the officer corps. Early in 1977 more than 20 officers were arrested for issuing a critical appraisal of the regime and advocating a return to civilian government. Several months later a military edict made mandatory the retirement of officers who fail to maintain the armed forces' "coherent line" or "whose activities compromise the purposes which inspire their actions." Under the terms of that decree, 46 officers—including an admiral and two generals—were purged.

The arrests and purges touched most heavily on the navy where the legalist tradition remains strongest. But it is likely that the majority of officers throughout the armed forces, particularly the younger ones, are looking for some kind of *apertura* ("opening"—a word frequently heard today in Montevideo) to civilian rule followed by an orderly "military retreat." They do not like the public enmity which the torture and repression has brought the armed forces and would prefer to hand the reins of government over to civilian politicians while the military maintains a "watchdog" position against the "resurgence of subversion." They realize that in the long run the military's position is untenable. The regime has virtually no base of domestic or international support, ruling largely by sheer force of arms. Moreover, as a small and economically weak nation, Uruguay is less able to resist external pressures than are Brazil, Argentina, or even Chile.

The moderate's position within the military was expressed in May 1977 by the retiring commander of the second military region, General Eduardo Zubia, in his farewell speech. Because of the past threat of subversion, said Zubia, the military had needed to call upon the Uruguayan people to make many sacrifices, including that of "obligatory silence." Now that internal security was being restored, he continued, the need for such sacrifices would soon end. Thus Zubia simultaneously justified past military repression while extending hope for an *apertura* in the near future.

While as many as 70 percent of the officer corps may subscribe to this moderate line, until recently they have lacked the military strength to implement change. The hard-liners, particularly General Cristi, commander of Montevideo's first military region, maintained the critical troops. Following Cristi's retirement last year and his replacement by General Rodolfo Zubia, Eduardo's brother, the balance of power shifted somewhat toward the center. But the moderates still suffer from a lack of leadership and organization. Nor do they have a well-defined plan for the transition to civilian government that will satisfy all the contending military and civilian factions.

Meanwhile, General Alvarez and the populists remain apart from both the moderates and the hard-liners. Alvarez also recognizes the utility of a military withdrawal from politics, but, as one Uruguayan political analyst put it to me, "Alvarez rejects the moderates' plan for a 'quiet retreat.' For him the withdrawal must be triumphant." Rather than silently sneaking back to its tents, the armed forces must make clear to the people that the military has positively reorganized Uruguayan society and saved it from subversion.

Alvarez's interests go beyond protecting the military's honor. A presidential election of some sort is scheduled for 1981. Whether there is a single candidate for the position (as called for by the military's current plans) or two (as favored by Vegh Villegas and other civilian "moderrates"), General Alvarez—a man of great personal ambition—wishes to run as the favorite son of a triumphant military.

It is not clear how strong Alvarez's position is. The limits which he and other populists placed on Vegh Villegas's conservative economic policies helped to preserve the jobs and income levels of both government bureaucrats and the working class. For that reason, and because of his more dynamic style, he is the only military figure with any significant support from the civilian population. Yet his hands are as tainted by torture as are those of any hard-liner. Consequently, his candidacy would be unacceptable to Wilson Ferreira and other progressive civilian leaders. Many of his military colleagues, whatever their orientation, view him as an opportunist with little concern for broader military interests. Consequently, when Esteban Cristi retired as commander of the first military region last year, Alvarez was blocked from assuming command. In February 1978, however, he succeeded retiring General Julio Vadora as Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces. Though prestigious, the position actually holds less direct power than the first region command. Still, General Alvarez hopes it will serve as a stepping stone to the presidency.

Predictions about the future are hazardous. The military is divided, not only by differing philosophies, but also by interservice and personal rivalries. In the words of one observer, "few officers are accepting orders from one another and the four military regions are now virtual fiefdoms ruled by commanding officers who appoint all civilian officials in their jurisdiction." Many issues remain to be resolved. Most officers are insistent that any withdrawal from power be accomplished "with honor" and that no trials be held for political crimes, such as torture, committed by the military while in control. They are haunted by the specter of a "Greek style resolution." Some important civilian leaders such as Wilson Ferreira, however, insist

that at least the most serious violators of human rights be held accountable.

Since assuming the post of Armed Forces Commander in Chief, Gregorio Alvarez has continued to pursur his presidential ambitions. An April "civil-military unity" rally in Minas (base of Alvarez's old fourth military region command) was, in fact, a virtual presidential campaign rally for the general. What Alvarez and many other officers seem to envision for Uruguay is a transition toward "Brazilian style" elections in which a military-designated candidate either runs unopposed (1981) or with nominal opposition (1986). Under such a plan, a limited role would be offered to those leaders of the two traditional political parties who wish to achieve some kind of *apertura* at almost any price. So far most Blancos have remained loyal to Wilson Ferreira and have rejected this solution. Colorados may be more receptive. At the same time, former Commander in Chief Julio Cesar Vadora (currently Ambassador to Paraguay) has shown some indication that he would not mind being the military-designated presidential candidate.

In short, the optimistic expectations held by many Uruguayans in mid-1977 that a meaningful transition to civilian government was at hand have faded considerably. The generals have been far more resistant to external pressures than many observers had thought possible. Moreover, in an effort to secure broader military backing for his presidential aspirations, Alvarez has tried to demonstrate to the hardliners that he can be as repressive as they are. Arrests and other forms of political repression have not let up in 1978 (if anything, they have intensified) and there is no longer much reason to expect meaningful social reform from the populists, even if Alvarez does achieve the presidency. Ultimately, the military will probably have to make some concessions to external pressures and to the need to improve the still stagnant economy. The question is, "how and when?"

(June 1978)

NOTES

1. Part of the research for this Report was conducted in Montevideo, Uruguay from June-December 1976 under grant from the Midwest Universities Consortium for International Activities (MUCIA). Dr. Oscar Maggiolo, former Rector of Uruguay's national university, and other Uruguayan exiles living in Caracas, Venezuela have been very helpful in discussing recent developments with me.

2. T. Szulc, *The Twilight of the Tyrants* (New York: 1959).

3. Of course there were other military dictatorships in Central America and the Caribbean.

4. There is a growing literature in this area. See especially: Guillermo O'Donnell, *Modernization and Bureaucratic-Authoritarianism* (Berkley: University of California Institute of International Studies, 1973); James Malloy (ed.), *Authoritarianism and Corporatism in Latin America* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1977); and David Collier, "Industrial Modernization and Political Change," *World Politics* (July 1978); for an excellent review of writings on the military in Latin America, see Abraham Lowenthal, "Armies and Politics in Latin America," *World Politics* (October 1974).

5. Not all Latin American military regimes fit this model. For example, the Peruvian military government—particularly from 1968-1975—was reformist and nationalist. The bureaucratic-authoritarian model applies most directly to Uruguay, Brazil, Chile, and Argentina. In the past few years, the Peruvian regime has moved somewhat in this direction.

6. See, for example, Russell Fitzgibbon and Kenneth Johnson, "Measurement of Latin American Political Change," *American Political Science Review* (September 1961).

7. C. Real de Azua, "Ejército y Política en el Uruguay" in *El Militarismo* (Montevideo: *Cuadernos de Marcha*, March 1967). For an account of the military through 1973, see Ronald McDonald, "The Rise of Military Politics in Uruguay," *Inter-American Economic Affairs* (Spring 1975). McDonald notes that in 1965 Uruguay only ranked 91st of 121 countries in the world in percent of GNP spent on the military.

8. Friends of mine who traveled in Western Europe several years after the end of the second World War told me that they were struck by the fact that living standards there seemed lower than in Uruguay.

9. Figures are drawn from *Marcha* (Montevideo), November 2, 1972, p. 7, and the International Institute for Strategic Studies (London).

10. Obviously not all political leaders were dishonest. But standards had dropped sharply from the days, early in the century, when José Batlle y Ordoñez fired one of his ministers for accepting a watch as a gift.

11. In my interviews with officers and large landowners, I found that many military men viewed the rich ranchers as effete, nonproductive playboys. The ranchers, in turn, often saw the officer corps as a bunch of ignorant and uncouth bunglers.

12. After the coup, Trabal was appointed to the Uruguayan Embassy in Paris. In 1974, he was assassinated in Paris by unknown assailants.

13. See Patrick Knight, "Hopes Fade for Uruguay's Forced March," *The Manchester Guardian* (February 7, 1975).

14. The Peruvian and Brazilian regimes seem to be realizing this now. Eric Nordlinger argues that this is true throughout the developing world and helps explain why military rulers (at least juntas) usually don't stay in power very

long. See, Nordlinger, *Soldiers in Politics: Military Coups and Governments* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1977).

15. Montevideo is a tremendously tight-knit society where it is impossible to keep a political secret even in an authoritarian state. Copies of Bordaberry's memorandum had been leaked, and Xerox copies were available all over the city. All the Frente Amplio parties were already illegal. The only parties still legal were the Blancos and the Colorados which could not actively engage in politics.

16. In an interview, Vegh Villegas told me that his two greatest disappointments as Finance Minister were his inability to sell government enterprises (such as the state oil refineries and cement plants) to foreign, private enterprises and his inability significantly to reduce the number of public employees. He indicated that "powerful forces in the government" had stopped him in both these areas but refused to name these "forces."

17. The decree had complex provisions that stripped politicians from leftist parties of more political rights, for a longer period of time, than it did for Blancos or Colorados. In effect the decree, if enforced, would ban most Uruguay political leaders from holding office until 1991 and would make the next two proposed presidential elections rather meaningless.

18. Under the terms of Uruguay's election laws (prior to 1973) each party could run multiple presidential candidates. The votes of all candidates in each party were added together and the winner was the greatest vote getter *within* the party with the most votes. Thus, although Ferreira had more votes than Bordaberry, Bordaberry was declared the winner because the total vote of all Colorado candidates was slightly higher than that of the Blancos. Given his courageous stance against the current regime (for which he was almost murdered by a death squad in Buenos Aires), Ferreira would undoubtedly easily win any free election in which he were allowed to run.

19. Subsequently, Congress terminated aid to Argentina. Brazil has refused to accept further military assistance and last year Uruguay turned down economic aid. The Uruguayan regime reacted strongly against the earlier cut-off of military assistance and launched a large media campaign against "international interference in Uruguayan affairs."

20. Only a few concessions were made to foreign criticism. Shortly before Jimmy Carter took office, the government accounted for a number of Uruguayans who had disappeared in Buenos Aires or Montevideo. They had been presumed dead, but surfaced in Uruguayan jails.