Bangladesh Parliamentary Elections February 27, 1991, A Post-Election Report

NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTE
FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

The National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) conducts nonpartisan political development programs overseas. By working with political parties and other institutions, NDI seeks to promote, maintain and strengthen democratic institutions and pluralistic values in new and emerging democracies. NDI has conducted a series of democratic development programs in more than 30 countries including Argentina, Bangladesh, Bulgaria, Chile, the Czech and Slovak Federative Republic, Haiti, Hungary, Liberia, Namibia, Nicaragua, Northern Island, Pakistan, Panama, the Philippines, Poland, Romania, the Soviet Union and Uruguay.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On February 27, 1991, three months after the resignation of Hussein Mohammed Ershad, Bangladesh held parliamentary elections. These elections, which provided the people of Bangladesh with an opportunity to freely choose new national leaders, were described by some as a "second independence." A neutral caretaker government saw the holding of free and fair elections as its *raison d'etre*. Acting President, Shahabuddin Ahmed, who had been the nation's sitting Chief Justice, wanted to leave a genuinely free and fair election as his legacy. And for the first time in many years, all major political parties were participating in the elections and had stated their commitment to and confidence in the process.

For eight years, Hussein Mohammed Ershad maintained a firm grip over the 115 million inhabitants of Bangladesh. As an army lieutenant general, Ershad took power in a 1982 coup and declared martial law. Later, he ascended to the presidency in controversial elections in which major opposition parties refused to participate. After 1987, opposition political parties stepped up their efforts to force Ershad's resignation, but, until late 1990, with little apparent success.

Under the Ershad regime, opposition parties boycotted elections because they did not believe they were given a fair chance to compete. Confidence in the electoral process had been eroded by serious and repeated complaints of partiality in the administration of elections, violence at the polls, and the intimidating environment in which elections were held.

On December 4, 1990, after weeks of growing popular unrest, President Ershad announced his resignation and the dissolution of parliament. An interim government, headed by Shahabuddin Ahmed, immediately announced plans for parliamentary elections to be held on February 27, 1991. Those elections took place as scheduled, and Khaleda Zia's Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) won approximately 138 of the 298 seats contested. On March 19, 1991, Acting President Shahabuddin Ahmed announced the formation of a new government with Begum Zia as prime minister. The new parliament convened on April 5, 1991.

After more than a year of program work in Bangladesh, NDI sent a four-member team to observe the February 27 elections. In the days leading up to the elections, the NDI team consulted a wide range of Bangladeshis, including leaders and candidates from political parties, senior government and Election Commission officials, civic organization and student leaders, journalists, members of the diplomatic community, and members of other international observer groups. On election day, the NDI team observed the balloting in 14 polling centers in nine constituencies in Dhaka and Narayanganj, and it observed the counting process in one polling center. Team members also visited the headquarters of Bangladeshi pollwatching organizations on election night.

The NDI team was not a full-scale election observation mission, and its coverage on election day was necessarily limited. Because of its small size, the team did not issue a public statement or hold a press conference to comment on the elections. The NDI team did, however, draw on its close contacts with various Bangladeshi observer groups to form impressions of the elections throughout the country.

The NDI team agreed with the apparent consensus of most Bangladeshi and international observers that the February 1991 elections were generally open, orderly and well administered. Election officials and security personnel appeared serious about conducting a fair and peaceful election. There was relatively little violence or intimidation, and the public showed genuine excitement and enthusiasm both during the campaign and on election day. On election night, Election Commission personnel rapidly tabulated and announced the election results.

At the same time, the NDI team raised several issues of concern. These included significant problems with the voters' lists, attempts to vote by underage individuals, and significant violations of campaign expenditure limits. Disturbances reportedly caused officials to halt polling in 34 polling stations in four constituencies. The team was also concerned that the public may have viewed the process as fair and accepted the results only because there was an independent interim government administering the elections. Bangladesh must work to ensure the fairness of future elections held under elected, partisan governments and in a potentially more polarized atmosphere.

NDI also hopes that Bangladeshi political parties and independent monitoring groups will strengthen their observing efforts, including the development of an independent vote count.

Notwithstanding these problems, the February 1991 parliamentary elections represented a major step forward in the democratization process in Bangladesh.

I. INTRODUCTION

On December 4, 1990, in response to massive public protests calling for his ouster, Hussein Mohammed Ershad announced his resignation as president of Bangladesh and dissolved the nation's parliament. An interim government, led by Chief Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed as Acting President, pledged to take all measures necessary to ensure a free and open campaign, leading to peaceful democratic elections.

In the parliamentary elections on February 27, 1991, the people of Bangladesh had a rare opportunity to freely elect their national leaders. The elections were open, well administered and relatively nonviolent, and most Bangladeshis accepted the results and viewed the process as free and fair.

NDI's Presence in Bangladesh

NDI initiated its program work in Bangladesh with a survey mission in 1987. Contacts established at that time led to Bangladeshi participation in an NDI election-observation mission in the Philippines and stimulated interest in NDI support for election-related programs in Bangladesh. During the past 15 months, NDI-sponsored groups visited the country six times.

A five-member multinational team, which included members from the Philippines, Sri Lanka and the United States, observed the upazila (subdistrict) elections in March 1990. The team issued a report that made recommendations on how to improve and promote confidence in the electoral process. The report, which was distributed widely in Bangladesh and elsewhere, suggested specific electoral reforms and emphasized the need to develop indigenous election-monitoring programs.

Based on the findings of that observer team and of a small survey team that visited Dhaka in October 1990, NDI developed a program to support nonpartisan election-monitoring organizations in Bangladesh. In January 1991, a four-member multinational team assessed the electoral process and began the training of domestic election monitors from Bangladeshi political parties and nongovernmental organizations. In addition to holding training workshops, the January team met with a wide range of political, governmental and opinion leaders in Bangladesh. The team reported its findings to NDI as part of the overall observation effort and recom-mended that the Institute sponsor an observer delegation for the February elections.

During February, in response to specific requests, NDI continued its support for Bangladeshi election-monitoring groups by organizing week long visits of two election-monitoring experts from the Philippines. In the two weeks leading up the elections, these experts worked closely with several Bangladeshi groups in the organization of pollwatching networks for the elections.

Because of security concerns related to the Persian Gulf war, which reached its peak just before the Bangladesh elections, NDI ultimately decided not to send a large delegation for the February 27 elections. Nevertheless, NDI did send a four-person team. The team was comprised of an election-monitoring expert from the Philippines and three NDI staff members. In the days before the elections, team members met with Acting President Shahabuddin Ahmed, Foreign Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed, the members and senior officials of the Election Commission, political party leaders and candidates, members of the diplomatic community, leaders and members of international and domestic election observer groups, journalists, student leaders and others.

On election day, together with two Bangladeshis involved in domestic election-monitoring efforts, the NDI team visited 14 polling sites in nine constituencies in Dhaka and Narayanganj. The team observed the opening of the polls at 8 a.m. at Vikarunessa Girls' School in the Dhaka 10 constituency. The team subsequently visited the following constituencies: Dhaka 3 (Begum Sharkari Biddyalai), Dhaka 4 (Shampur Primary School), Dhaka 6 (T & T Government School), Dhaka 9 (Mohammadpur High School, Mohammadpur Government Primary School, and Mohammadpur Kendric College), Dhaka 11 (Kazipara Madrasha, Mirpur School, and Kazipara Primary School), Narayanganj 3 (Tarabo Primary School) and Narayanganj 5 (Government Primary School). Near the closing of the polls the team returned to Kendric College in Dhaka 9, where it had earlier heard reports of minor disturbances, to watch the counting process. The group divided to watch simultaneously the separate tabulations of men's and women's ballots.

In the course of the day, the team also met with journalists from *The New York Times*, *The New Nation*, *The Morning Sun* and the Voice of America. The team also shared its observations with election monitors from several Bangladeshi groups. In the evening, team members visited the headquarters of two local observer groups to see their operations and learn of any election day problems.

Role of Domestic and International Observers

NDI believes that international election observers can help to promote an open election environment, give credibility to the results of a free and fair process, and provide the international community with an objective assessment. Outside, independent observers can provide legitimacy for well-run elections -- legitimacy that may be a prerequisite to further democratic development. At the same time, international observers can also serve to complement and encourage domestic observation efforts.

The interim government, the leading political parties and various other Bangladeshis welcomed and encouraged international observers. The foreign ministry established a special department to facilitate the efforts of these observers. In addition to the NDI team, international observers included a 30-member delegation affiliated with the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), a 12-member Commonwealth delegation, groups from the British and Japanese parliaments, and a representative of the European parliament.

Bangladeshi Observers

The presence of domestic observers at polling stations can provide voters with a sense of security and deter more blatant forms of intimidation. Moreover, domestic monitoring groups can potentially mobilize enough observers to be present at nearly all polling sites.

A number of Bangladeshi nongovernmental organizations, human rights groups and professional associations mounted serious pollwatching efforts. Among them were the Coordinating Council for Human Rights in Bangladesh (CCHRB), the Bangladesh Movement for Fair Elections (*Bangladesh Mukto Nirbachan Andolan* or BMNA), the Citizens Election Commission (CEC), the Bangladesh Society for the Enforcement of Human Rights (BSEHR), the Bar Association, and the Grameen Bank. In the year before the elections, NDI developed contacts and worked with each of these groups. The CCHRB had experience in pollwatching from the March 1990 upazila elections and had shown its ability to mobilize its constituent organizations at the grassroots level. BMNA attempted to constitute itself as the umbrella organization for election-monitoring efforts and claimed a large number of nongovernmental, human rights, professional and trade organizations under its banner (although several other organizations -- most notably the CCHRB -- did not work with BMNA). The BSEHR and the CEC cooperated in organizing a third observer network, and the Bar Association mounted its own effort. The Grameen Bank encouraged its 900,000 members (borrowers) to vote early, to stay and observe the polls for the rest of the day, and to report back on what they saw.

For the most part, these different organizations mounted separate monitoring efforts, and they differed in their coverage and method of operating. There was not greater coordination, in part, because some groups viewed others as not strictly nonpartisan. Nevertheless, these groups did attempt to cooperate to some degree, primarily by sharing information and methodologies. CCHRB organizers, for example, made their training sessions open to all, even though they expected to keep confidential their own field reports and initial findings in order to write their own report. Representatives of these and other groups attended, often jointly, NDI-sponsored training sessions in January and February. (Members of political parties also participated in the NDI program, including representatives of the BNP, the Awami League, and the Workers' Party.) Since the elections, representatives of a number of these groups have expressed an interest in attending a joint forum in order to share their findings.

II. POLITICAL BACKGROUND

Since independence in 1971, violence and the force of arms have plagued Bangladeshi political life. Both of the nation's first two major leaders were assassinated, and coups and attempted coups have haunted Bangladeshi politics throughout the country's short history.

Elections over the past two decades, too, have been turbulent, marked by allegations of fraud and intimidation. This in turn has led to skepticism about election results. As a result, during the 1980s, opposition parties generally boycotted elections and resorted to strikes and demonstrations to express political views.

Government Since Independence

Bangladesh won independence from Pakistan in 1971 after a bloody nine-month war of liberation. The territory, known as East Bengal under British rule, had been East Pakistan since the partition of British India in 1947.

Sheik Mujibar Rahman was Bangladesh's leading nationalist leader before independence and its founding father in 1971. Mujib became prime minister in the country's first government after independence. In December 1974, facing economic deterioration and mounting civil disorder, Mujib declared a state of emergency, and one month later he persuaded parliament to amend the constitution to establish an executive presidency and to institute a one-party system under the control of the newly formed Bangladesh Krishak Sramik Awami League (BAKSAL). Mujib himself assumed the office of president.

In August 1975, Mujib was assassinated by a group of Bangladesh army majors. Four months later, after the second of two coups four days apart, General Ziaur Rahman, the Chief of Army Staff, emerged as the dominant figure. Zia took over as chief martial law administrator in November 1976 and as president in April 1977. In presidential elections in June 1978, Zia defeated retired General Osmani, who had been a leading Bangladeshi freedom fighter and, in parliamentary elections in February 1979, Zia's Bangladesh Nationalist Party won 207 of 300 seats.

Zia himself was assassinated in a May 1981 coup. Vice President Justice Abdus Sattar became Acting President, and he was elected president as the BNP's candidate in elections six months later, defeating the Awami League candidate, Kamal Hossain.

The Ershad Era

In March 1982, the chief of army staff, Lieutenant General Hussain Mohammed Ershad, took power in a bloodless coup. He assumed the presidency in December 1983. In March 1985, Ershad held a national referendum on his leadership, and he claimed to win overwhelmingly.

In early 1986, Ershad formed the Jatiya Party, and restored political rights, including the right to hold public rallies. The Awami League led by Sheikh Hasina Wajed, daughter of Sheik Mujib, agreed to participate in parliamentary elections in May; the BNP, led by Begum Khaleda Zia, widow of President Zia, declined. In those elections, opposition candidates won 122 of the 300 available seats, while the Jatiya Party won a majority. Opposition leaders, foreign

observers, and journalists charged that there had been widespread fraud. When the National Assembly met in July, the Awami League and other opposition parties walked out.

Presidential elections were held in October 1986, but neither the Awami League nor the BNP participated. The government claimed a turnout of 50 percent, but the opposition, largely supported by the foreign press, maintained that turnout was light and again made allegations of serious and widespread fraud.

Once political activity was again permitted in 1986, questions about the fairness of the elections motivated much of the opposition to question Ershad's legitimacy. In October 1987, the fractious opposition united on a "one-point" demand that Ershad resign so that a neutral caretaker government could hold free and fair elections. This unified opposition movement elicited support from a wide spectrum of Bangladesh society. It organized many protest strikes but failed to dislodge Ershad from power.

While in power, Ershad enjoyed support from industrialized countries which contribute about $2 billion a year to Bangladesh. The Ershad government's policies favoring free markets, export industries and infrastructure projects won backing from donors, including the U.S. and the World Bank.

In October 1990, the opposition launched the mass protest movement that finally culminated in the collapse of the Ershad regime. After a mass protest on October 10 resulted in the death of one student, the opposition gained momentum and support. Led by student organizations that coalesced into the All Party Student Unity (APSU), the mass movement demonstrated its strength in the streets. Strikes and blockades continued in Dhaka during the next six weeks.

On December 4, 1990, bowing to the popular outcry that had immobilized his country, Ershad announced his resignation and the dissolution of parliament. At the behest of the opposition leaders, Ershad, before leaving office, named Chief Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed as the Vice President. Upon Ershad's formal resignation on December 6, Shahabuddin Ahmed took over as Acting President. Under the Constitution, parliamentary elections were to be held within 90 days.

In an effort to pacify students and opposition leaders, the interim government placed Ershad under house arrest, pending trial on charges of corruption and possession of illegal arms. The government also arrested many of Ershad's political associates and charged them with public misdeeds.

The new government also took steps to encourage a free press and to remove some of the more restrictive laws from the nation's statute books. Opposition leaders voiced their approval of these steps and pledged their support for and participation in the parliamentary elections.

The Political Players

While there are many political parties and splinter groupings in Bangladesh, the Awami League -- the party of the nation's founder, Sheik Mujib -- and the Bangladeshi Nationalist Party (BNP) -- the party founded by General Ziaur Rahman -- have dominated opposition politics. Mujib's daughter, Sheikh Hasina, has led the Awami League, while General Zia's widow, Begum Khaleda Zia, has guided the BNP. Sheikh Hasina and Begum Zia have a long-standing rivalry. The joint efforts of the two women and parties in the movement to remove Ershad marked an unusual display of cooperation, but after Ershad's fall the relationship seemed headed again toward acrimony.

Since its days in power, the Awami League's platform has been based on secularism, socialism, democracy, and Bengali nationalism. The party has traditionally had a close relationship with India. It has in the past advocated nationalization of certain industries and increased government expenditures on behalf of the impoverished. For a number of years, the party has headed a coalition of eight left-of-center parties.

The BNP, on the other hand, is a right-of-center party that advocates free-market economic policies and leans toward Islam and support for the military. In the elections, the BNP headed a seven-party coalition.

Other political groupings viewed as significant in the 1991 elections included Ershad's Jatiya Party, the Jamaat-e-Islami (an Islamic, religiously oriented party), and a five-party coalition of leftist parties.

Whether the Jatiya Party should have been allowed to run was the subject of intense debate, especially among students. Election officials initially rejected Ershad's candidacy but the Election Commission subsequently reversed that decision.

After the fall of the Ershad regime, the APSU began to weaken as its leaders returned to partisan activities on behalf of their sponsoring political parties. Indeed, five major APSU leaders themselves ran for parliament.

Bangladesh's Election Experience

Fraud and other serious irregularities throughout the process, from voter registration to vote tallying, marred Bangladesh elections in the past. Consequently, few Bangladeshis had faith in the integrity of the electoral process.

Criticisms of the electoral process have fallen into three general categories: (a) intimidation and the potential for violence, (b) problems with identification of voters, and (c) ballot stuffing and the integrity of the count.

Intimidation. In previous elections, specific charges of intimidation ranged from gangs chasing voters away from polling stations to more subtle threats by government officials to withhold essential government services. Perhaps the greatest single problem has been the physical intimidation of voters. In many places, bands of thugs known as mastans, often sponsored or encouraged by parties and candidates themselves, threatened voters. In addition, reports of intimidation and physical harassment of political party leaders, candidates, and party activists were commonplace.

The perception of widespread political intimidation undermined confidence in the electoral process and the political system. Indeed, prior to the 1991 elections, the threat of organized intimidation of voters was the primary cause for concern.

Identification of Voters. In the past, problems with the voters' lists and the identification of voters reportedly led to multiple voting and disenfranchisement of voters in whose names ballots had already been cast. Allegations that such problems were widespread tainted public perceptions of the process.

Validity of Ballots and Integrity of the Count. There were many allegations in past elections that ballot boxes were stuffed with sham ballots and that officials manipulated the count. In the run-up to the 1991 elections however, the presence of an apparently neutral interim government, which seemed determined to hold fair elections, ameliorated anxiety about fraud in the casting and counting of ballots.

III. ELECTION ENVIRONMENT AND CAMPAIGN

Parties and Candidates

A total 2774 candidates -- 2350 from 73 political parties/alliances and 424 independents -- competed in the February 27 elections. (After the ouster of Ershad, 90 parties had applied to the Election Commission for election symbols.) There were 298 seats contested, two elections having been postponed due to the death of candidates (one in election-related violence).

The BNP was the only party that fielded candidates in all 298 constituencies. The Awami League ran candidates for 262 seats and allocated 36 other nominations to its allies in the eight-party alliance. The Jatiya Party and Jamaat-e-Islami followed closely with 270 and 220 candidates, respectively.

Election authorities rejected 57 nominations, most notably the five of ousted President Ershad. Of these, appeals were filed in 33 cases. The Election Commission subsequently reversed 32 of these challenged decisions, including those against Ershad, and declared those nominations valid.

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Election analysts predicted a two-party contest between the Awami League and the BNP, with the smaller parties and the Jatiya Party expected to win relatively few seats. Much of the pre-election press attention focused on the two major parties.

Two days before the elections, just before a cooling off period in which campaigning was banned, Sheikh Hasina and Begum Zia appeared on television and both held large rallies in Dhaka. There were complaints before the election, most notably from the Jatiya Party Acting Chairman Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury, of unequal access to and unfair coverage by state-run radio and television and other mass media.

Campaign Issues

The personalities of the country's two most important leaders, Sheik Hasina of the Awami League and Begum Khaleda Zia of the BNP, dominated the political scene. Their long-standing personal rivalry, temporarily put aside during the 1990 anti-Ershad movement, resurfaced during the election campaign. This raised concern about the prospects for political tolerance and the two parties' ability to work together constructively after the elections.

The Awami League sought to make the elections a referendum on a return to a parliamentary form of government. The BNP, on the other hand, while thought to favor the presidential system, did not take a strong position on the issue. At the time of Ershad's resignation, the parties in effect agreed to let the new parliament decide the future shape of the government after the elections. It would take a two-thirds majority to amend the constitution.

Other campaign issues centered on such recurrent concerns as Bangladesh's relationship with India (the Awami League being accused of doing India's bidding), government corruption, the disastrous state of the economy, the role of religion in the society, and the maintenance of law and order.

IV. ELECTORAL FRAMEWORK

The Constitution of Bangladesh provides for elections to be held periodically, both for the office of president and for representatives to the national parliamentary body, the *Jatiya Sangsad* or House of the Nation. The Constitution mandates that elections for parliament are to be held within 90 days of the expiration or dissolution of parliament. If not sooner dissolved by the president, the parliament expires by law five years after it first convenes.

The Election Commission

The Constitution establishes an Election Commission charged with overseeing and administering the election process. The Commission consists of a chief election commissioner and as many other commissioners as the president deems necessary. The president appoints the commissioners for a term of five years.

The Constitution declares that the Election Commission acts as an independent body. The Commission is responsible for preparing the electoral rolls, conducting the elections for president and parliament, and delimiting the constituencies for parliamentary representation. Parliament may promulgate laws regarding these and all other matters relating to elections; there is no judicial review of any law relating to these matters.

In addition to the duties delegated to the Commission by the Constitution, the Representation of the People Order of 1972, as amended, confers on the Commission "such powers . . . as may be necessary for ensuring that an election is conducted honestly, justly, and fairly . . ." To this end, the Constitution requires the executive branch to assist the Commission in the discharge of its functions.

Electoral Rolls: Voter and Candidate Eligibility

For each constituency, the Election Commission prepares an electoral roll, which lists the names of eligible voters in that locality. The Constitution prohibits any special electoral roll classification based on religion, race, sex or caste. To be eligible to appear on an electoral roll, one must be a Bangladeshi citizen of at least 18 years who has not been declared by law to suffer from an unsound mind.

A citizen of Bangladesh who has attained the age of 25 is eligible to run for a seat in the parliament, unless he or she (1) is declared by a competent court to be of unsound mind, (2) is an undischarged insolvent, (3) becomes a citizen of a foreign state, (4) has been convicted and sentenced to a term of at least two years for committing a crime of moral turpitude, unless five years have elapsed since his or her release, or (5) is disqualified pursuant to any other law. A candidate will also be disqualified if he or she is a civil servant or acts as an upazila chairman. Disputes about the eligibility of a candidate are referred to the Election Commission for final determination.

No one may serve as a representative of more than one constituency, although a single candidate may run in up to five. In the event that someone is elected in more than one constituency, the candidate must choose within 30 days the single constituency he or she will represent. By-elections are then held for the seat or seats abandoned.

Citizens become candidates for parliament by nomination. Any person eligible to vote in a particular constituency may nominate any qualified person to be a contesting candidate. Another eligible voter must second the nomination. Candidates must deposit 5000 taka (approximately $135) in order to be entered on the ballot. After the outcome of the election has been announced, this deposit is returned to the candidate if he or she receives more than one-eighth of the total number of votes. The official who presides over the elections in that constituency reviews the nomination documents; if no defect exists, the official endorses the nominations as valid. A candidate may appeal a rejection of his or her nomination to the Commission.

Election Administration

The Election Commission appoints for each constituency a "returning officer" who coordinates the parliamentary election process and tallies and announces the final vote counts. A "presiding officer" oversees each polling station. The presiding officer maintains order at the station and counts the votes at his or her designated voting site. The contesting candidates may, before commencement of the poll, appoint for each polling station no more than two "polling agents." In addition, contesting candidates must appoint an "election agent" to keep track of all campaign expenditures made by or on behalf of the candidate.

The returning officer supplies to each presiding officer a copy of the electoral roll indicating the identity of the electors entitled to vote at that polling station. The returning officer also provides the requisite number of ballot boxes.

The presiding officer is responsible for ensuring that every voter is able to mark his or her ballot paper in secret before folding it and inserting it into the ballot box. To this end, the presiding officer is required to keep order at the polling station and may remove any person who acts inappropriately. The presiding officer may not exercise this power of removal to deprive a voter of an opportunity to cast a ballot. The presiding officer is to report any irregularities affecting the fairness of the vote to that constituency's returning officer.

Immediately after the close of the poll, the presiding officer, in the presence of the contesting candidates or their agents, proceeds to count the ballots. No one other than the polling officials, contesting candidates, and election and polling agents may be present at the count. Improperly marked ballots are filed in a separate envelope and are not added to the vote count. Any ballot may be challenged by a candidate or his or her agent as being improperly marked or otherwise invalid. Challenged ballots are also kept in a separate packet but are counted in the vote.

After counting the votes, the presiding officer seals the ballot papers, certifies the results and forwards the ballots and vote count to the returning officer who, in turn, consolidates the vote count from all polling stations in the constituency. (In the event that two or more candidates come out in a tie, the returning officer decides the matter, in the presence of the candidates, by drawing lots.) After obtaining the final result, the returning officer publicly declares the winner and publishes the total number of votes received by each candidate. The official ballot counting documentation and marked copies of the electoral rolls are open for public inspection for up to one year after the election.

Election Expenses

Every contesting candidate must submit to the returning officer a statement of the probable sources of funding to meet election expenses, including a break-down of the amount to be supplied from his or her own personal resources (and the source of that income), sums to be borrowed or received as contributions from relatives (and their income sources), and funds

to be borrowed or received as contribution from any other person, political party or association. If money is received subsequently from a source not mentioned in the filing, a supplementary disclosure must be filed within three days of the receipt.

No one may make any expenditure toward the election of a candidate other than contributions made directly to the candidate's election agent. The candidate, however, may personally spend up to 5000 taka (about $135) on his own behalf. Total election expenses of a contesting candidate, excluding the personal expenditures by the candidate, may not exceed 30,000 taka (approximately $850). Personal expenditures made by the candidate and the *de minimis* expenses incurred by someone other than the election agent, must be reported to the election agent within seven days of the expenditure. Within 15 days of the announcement of the election results, each election agent must submit to the returning officer an expense report, which remains open to public inspection for one year.

Election Disputes

After depositing 1000 taka (about $30) with the Commission, any candidate may contest the election results and seek to have them declared void. The petitioner must give notice that he or she seeks to challenge the election results to all contesting candidates. A tribunal appointed by the Commission adjudicates the dispute and makes the final determination, subject to an appeal to the High Court Division of the Supreme Court.

Misconduct

In order to deter any disruption of the electoral process, the election laws declare a long list of offenses that carry stiff penalties and the 1991 amendments to the election law substantially increased the severity of the penalties. Article 78 of the law prohibits any person from convening, holding or attending "any public meeting" or promoting or joining "in any procession within the area of any constituency" for a period of 48 hours before midnight on election day. No campaigning may take place within 400 yards of any polling station during voting.

Interim Government Reforms of Electoral Process

The interim government took a number of actions that demonstrated its neutrality and commitment to a genuinely fair process.

First, the interim government completely reconstituted the Election Commission. The Acting President appointed three new election commissioners, all of whom were judges of the Supreme Court. Each was reported to be of exceptional caliber, honesty and integrity, and the judiciary itself is an institution that commands substantial respect in Bangladeshi society.

Second, the new government and the Election Commission adopted reforms of the electoral process that increased the Election Commission's control over the administration of the process. Specifically, the new rules placed all officials assigned to administer the elections under the direct control of the Election Commission. They also imposed on each candidate a maximum spending limit of 30,000 taka (approximately $850) and required that he or she file a financial disclosure statement before the election and again within two weeks after the election. The use of government resources during the campaign period was restricted, and election officials who violated electoral rules became, for the first time, subject to imprisonment.

Finally, the government took steps to ensure that the elections would take place in as peaceful an atmosphere as possible. The government ensured in particular that there would be adequate security for the elections by deploying the army throughout the country. The Acting President also adopted a rule that made local governmental entities legally responsible for any breakdown of law and order within their jurisdiction; in the event of any serious disturbances, local governmental authorities were subject to legal dissolution.

V.   CONDUCT OF THE ELECTIONS

Concerns about Election-Related Violence

Before the elections, there were serious concerns about the prospect of violence. There was a consensus that the threat of intimidation and violence -- rather than fraud or ballot rigging -- represented the greatest danger to a free and fair process.

Bangladesh has a history of election-related violence. In fact, the major parties contesting these elections had been accused of sponsoring or condoning intimidation in the past, and in recent elections there had been a great deal of fear of Jatiya Party agents. There was also great concern about the large supply of illegal arms; former President Ershad, for example, allegedly had eight unregistered weapons at his home, and a much-discussed government campaign to collect illegal arms was largely unsuccessful.

There was also concern in some quarters about the attitude of the military. In particular, some worried about how the military would react to a breakdown of law and order. During the course of the campaign and elections, however, the military appeared committed to ensuring a peaceful and democratic transition. Indeed, General Noor Uddin Khan, the chief of army staff, is thought to have played a key role in persuading Ershad to step down, and there was no suggestion that the military interfered with the interim government.

There were some 24,000 polling centers in the country, and the national police force numbered only around 70,000. Thus, many questioned the interim government's ability to protect all polling centers effectively and simultaneously. The elite Bangladesh Rifles (BDR), the Village Defense Forces and the Army, however, all assisted the police in providing security on election day and were able to keep the peace.

Encouraged by the Election Commission, the parties agreed to abide by a code of conduct, which may have deterred organized intimidation efforts.

Balloting Process

Polling stations were typically public buildings such as schools. As mentioned, a presiding officer supervised the operations of each polling station. A typical polling station included three to five separate polling booths, each manned by two polling officials. Presiding officers and other polling officials were generally individuals employed by the government, often as teachers or civil servants.

Uniformed, armed policemen and unarmed village defense forces provided security at each polling station. Army units were deployed throughout the country to provide additional security.

Polling hours were from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., and the count at the polling station immediately followed the closing of the polls. Men and women waited in separate lines and voted in separate polling compartments.

Identification of Voters. There were separate lists of voters for each polling booth at a given polling station. Each list contained the names of up to 500 voters and represented one or more villages. For each voter, the list included the voter's name, father's name, age, position and residence address.

To expedite the process of identifying voters, each voter, before entering the polling station, would typically report to one of several tables outside the station where representatives of the political parties or candidates had copies of the voters' lists. In most cases each candidate had his or her own table, and most voters presumably reported to the table of the candidate they supported. The party representative would find the voter's name and corresponding number on the list and write down his or her number on a small piece of paper with the candidate symbol on it. The voter would then proceed into the polling station and present the paper to the election officials, who would check the relevant name on the official version of the voters' list.

Party agents inside the polling stations and the voters' lists together functioned as the means of identifying voters and preventing ineligible individuals from casting ballots. These party agents were often people from the same locality as the voters, so that they could personally identify people coming to vote.

Issuance of Ballot. Ballots included symbols for each party printed in two columns on newsprint-quality paper. Each party was assigned a symbol on the ballot (e.g. the Awami League was a boat; the BNP, a sheaf of rice; the Jamaat-e-Islami, a scale; and the Jatiya Party, a plough).

The Election Commission distributed the ballots in books of 100, and it allocated as many ballots in each case as there were eligible voters at a given polling place. Each ballot was consecutively numbered on an attached stub or "counterfoil."

After being identified as eligible from the electoral roll, a voter would sign or mark his or her thumbprint on the counterfoil. An election official would mark the voter's thumb with indelible ink, in order to show that the voter had cast a ballot and thus to prevent him or her from voting again. Then, still in the presence of the candidate polling agents, a polling official would detach the ballot from the counterfoil, by tearing it out along a perforated line, and issue it to the voter with an ink stamp. The ballot contained the names and symbols of the candidates in alphabetical order. The voter would then take the ballot and the ink stamp into the booth and mark the symbol of his or her choice. Typically the polling "booth" was fairly rudimentary, sometimes little more than a piece of burlap hung in a way to offer some privacy, but the polling booths that team members observed appeared to provide sufficient privacy.

Polling officials would retain the books of "used" ballot stubs and return them to the presiding officer.

Ballot Boxes. After stamping the ballot, the voter would fold the ballot paper and drop it into the ballot box, again in front of the election officials and party polling agents. Ballot boxes came in two sizes, one about twice the size of the other.

At the beginning of the day, the presiding officer was to show candidate agents that each ballot box was empty and then seal it with string and wax. When a box was filled, it was to be returned to the presiding officer and a new one would be issued. This procedure meant that extra ballot boxes and wax would always be in the custody of the presiding officer.

Counting Process. At the close of the balloting, an election official brought all of the ballot boxes to one room for counting. In the counts that the team members observed, the presiding officer dumped the ballots out of the boxes into a pile in the center of a table. The unfolding and sorting process took place at the same time as each person involved in the count took ballots from the central pile, unfolded them, and sorted them into piles by candidate. Periodically they consolidated the piles, and at the conclusion of the sorting process the presiding officer counted each candidate's pile of ballots. The count took place in the presence of candidate polling agents.

Transmission of Results. Results from each polling station were communicated to the district returning officer. Typically the presiding officer would travel to the district center immediately after the completion of the count to report the results.

VI. ELECTION RESULTS

The BNP emerged in the elections as the largest single party in the parliament, winning a convincing victory over the rival Awami League. The Jatiya Party and the Jamaat-e-Islami also won a significant number of seats. Of the 76 political parties that participated, 65 failed to win any seats.

According to unofficial results, the BNP won 138 seats on election day, just a few seats short of an absolute majority. BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia competed and won in five constituencies. Contrary to pre-election expectations, the Awami League received only 85 seats, less than one-third of the total. The Awami League suffered a crushing defeat in greater Dhaka, winning only 2 of 29 seats, with party chair Sheikh Hasina winning only her home town of Gopalganj and losing two in Dhaka city.

The Jatiya Party came in with the third largest number of seats at 35. Ershad ran and won in five constituencies. The Jamaat-e-Islami captured 18 seats, with party chief Maulana Abbas Ali Khan contesting and losing two seats. Other parties winning seats included the Bangladesh Communist Party, which won five seats, and Baksal, which won five. Independent candidates won a total of three seats.

The Election Commission began announcing unofficial results late election night as part of 24-hour television coverage for the election period. Because of disturbances, the Election Commission ordered repolling in 23 centers in four constituencies.

By-elections were held in those four constituencies on March 9. In these elections, the Awami League won three seats, bringing its total to 88. (A small party won the other seat.) By-elections were held on March 14 and March 28 in the two constituencies not contested on February 27, and the BNP won both seats, bringing its total to 140.

The election laws stipulate that a candidate winning more than one constituency must decide within 30 days which seat he or she will take, and by-elections are to be scheduled for the seat or seats to be abandoned.

On March 20, Acting President Shahabuddin Ahmed announced the formation of a new government with Begum Zia as the prime minister. The new cabinet is comprised of 31 members, including 11 ministers, all of whom are from the BNP.

All political parties have, in effect, accepted the results. Without making any specific allegations or presenting evidence, Sheikh Hasina alleged fraud, calling the elections "free but not fair." She did not, however, call for repolling or take any steps to have the results invalidated. Hasina and other Awami League winners did take their seats in parliament.

VII. ELECTION DAY: OBSERVATIONS AND IMPRESSIONS

Overall, domestic and international observers, journalists, political parties and election administrators judged the February electoral process a success. The NDI team shared in this consensus. The team observed a process that seemed open, orderly and well administered and a campaign that was generally peaceful. As far as the NDI group could tell, the elections, while not entirely without problems, were generally fair and the results reflected the will of the people.

Positive Impressions

After observing the polling and counting on election day and consulting Bangladeshi leaders, members of domestic and international observer groups, and others, the NDI team was left with a number of positive impressions of the process. The administration of the elections seemed open and effective, and election authorities promptly tabulated and communicated the results. The election atmosphere was relatively peaceful, the public showed great enthusiasm for the political process, and the parties and their supporters appeared to cooperate well. The security forces, too, made a constructive contribution. Finally, there seemed to be a relatively free and vibrant press and, at least with respect to the leading two parties, even-handed media coverage of the campaign.

Administration. The polling places the team visited appeared well run and efficient, and presiding officers were professional and well versed in the electoral procedures. Voters lined up in an orderly manner, and election officials were able to find their names and issue ballot papers quickly and efficiently.

Peaceful Atmosphere. A small number of individuals (including one candidate) reportedly died as a result of election-related violence. Aside from these tragic incidents, the campaign period was generally peaceful and orderly. The team heard few complaints about threats or intimidation. In Dhaka, two days before the elections, an estimated 200,000 people attended simultaneous campaign rallies for both of the major parties and then dispersed only blocks away from each other without incident. As evidence of public confidence and lack of fear, many Bangladeshis pointed out that women voters turned out in large numbers.

Popular Enthusiasm. Enthusiasm for political parties and excitement about the elections were clearly in evidence in the days leading up to the elections. Ubiquitous political posters and banners festooned walls, and party symbols were seen everywhere. Awami League boats made of paper mache, for example, towered on bamboo platforms above city streets.

On election day, the excitement of the electorate was palpable. Voters and supporters of candidates from various parties demonstrated genuine enthusiasm and there was an upbeat, festive atmosphere. At the opening of the polls, there were large numbers of people waiting in line to vote, and in many locations crowds of people waited outside the polling places.

The team did note that more women appeared to be voting than in the 1990 upazila elections. Although reliable voting figures for previous elections are not available and the existing voters' rolls are suspect, it would appear that the turnout, reported at 54 percent of those eligible, was significantly higher than in the past.

Participation of Parties. In each polling place the NDI team visited, there were polling agents from each major party. These agents varied somewhat in their knowledge of the balloting process, but they seemed generally well briefed about the process and about what to do with any objections or complaints. The polling agents with whom the team spoke from the area and claimed to know most of the voters.

Security Forces. The NDI team noted that the security forces were visible. At each polling station, security included armed police and unarmed "ansars" and village defense forces. The team also spoke to patrols of the Bangladesh Rifles and army, who said that the situation was peaceful.

The various security forces seemed to be contributing to the generally orderly voting process and the calm atmosphere. In the places the NDI team visited, voters expressed support for security forces and the security force's presence appeared to reassure, rather than to intimidate, the voters.

Tabulation and Dissemination of Results. The election authorities took pains to tabulate and disseminate the election results rapidly. Bangladesh radio began to report early, partial returns soon after the polls closed and broadcast periodic updates until all returns had been announced. Bangladesh television constructed a studio at Election Commission headquarters in order to report results as they came in. This contributed to the perception that the Commission wanted the entire process to be as transparent as possible.

Access to Media. Observers reported that the two major parties had equal access to the state-run media. Both party leaders spoke on national television just before the election. NDI team members did not hear complaints from these parties about news coverage.

The Jatiya Party, in contrast, criticized its lack of media access. The party argued that its major leaders, who were under house arrest or in hiding, were not able to deliver their campaign messages to the public. Although the NDI team was not in a position to fully evaluate the issue of media coverage and media access, the failure to allow media access for Jatiya Party spokespersons would appear to be a cause for concern.

Attitude toward International Observers. The government, the Election Commission, the political parties and the Bangladeshi public welcomed international observers, who were afforded complete access to the electoral process. The Foreign Ministry's international observer unit, established to facilitate the work of the observers, deserves particular note. The unit was adequately staffed and well organized. It provided identificationy documents and, as requested,

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security and transportation. It also served as an informal coordination point for members of the various international delegations.

The Ministry's efforts were supportive, rather than intrusive; there was no pressure on the NDI team to reveal its election day itinerary, and there was no hint of any attempt at official control or supervision of the team's activities. This attitude spoke well of the government's intentions.

Concerns about the Electoral Process

The team noted several areas in which the electoral process could be strengthened for future elections. While these were identified as problem areas, they were not of a magnitude to affect the team's overall assessment.

Voters' List. The team heard two types of complaints about the voter rolls: the presence of fictitious names and the omission of eligible voters. Both problems appeared to be serious.

There were allegations that the previous government had "padded" the register, apparently with the intent to facilitate fraud. The Election Commission reported that names of apparently fictitious individuals were found on lists. The NDI team did not have sufficient information to determine the extent of this problem.

Perhaps even more significant was the problem of voters' names being left off the rolls, whether by omission or commission. The team heard complaints from would-be voters whose names had been omitted. The relatively brief period for election preparations and the general confusion regarding procedures for updating the voters' lists made it difficult for disenfranchised individuals to appeal to have their names placed on the register.

Underage Voters and Previously Cast Ballots. The team also noted several apparently underage individuals who were attempting to vote and saw at least one such person actually cast a ballot without being challenged. Nothing the team saw, however, suggested that any political party was involved in organizing or abetting underage voting. Team members also heard some complaints late in the day of voters attempting to cast their ballots only to be told that they had already been cast, although there were far fewer complaints of this nature than there had been during the 1990 upazila elections.

If underage individuals were able to vote or eligible voters were unable to exercise their franchise, it would appear that the Election Commission authorities, polling place administrators, and party agents need to be more efficient in ensuring that eligible voters are on the list, weeding out ineligible voters, and verifying voters' identities at the polls.

Campaign Expenditures. As noted earlier, the Election Commission established a maximum campaign spending limit of 30,000 taka per candidate. Most Bangladeshis were highly skeptical that this limit was being observed, and even candidates admitted that they were ignoring it (as, they said, were all the other candidates). There was certainly evidence of significant campaign expenditures. The large number of elaborate structures with party symbols, the ubiquitous leaflets and posters, and the use of cars or trucks with loudspeakers all suggest that the leading candidates had access to significant financial resources.

While it was not possible for the team to determine the extent of campaign spending limit violations, authorities should address the widespread perception that this election rule is meaningless and unenforced.

Parallel Vote Counts; Access of Domestic Groups. In many countries, political parties and/or independent election-monitoring groups have conducted their own vote counts, by independently aggregating the vote tallies from individual polling places, in order to check and to validate the official count. Sometimes such a count is done quickly in selected districts; other times it is conducted nationwide. These "parallel vote counts" help make the process more transparent and thus more credible to the public.

Neither the political parties nor the independent monitoring groups conducted a parallel vote count for the February 27 elections. While the political parties and their candidates successfully organized large networks of polling agents, they did not attempt to organize themselves and their agents so as to collect and tabulate results from polling stations. Other organizations apparently lack the human resources necessary to conduct a count or the interest to do so.

The Election Commission and government have not encouraged or facilitated domestic pollwatching or parallel vote count efforts. In fact, in these elections the Election Commission sent out a directive that technically barred nonpartisan, domestic observers from the polling stations, albeit without much practical effect. Also, the NDI team heard that, despite a rule requiring them to do so upon request, not all presiding officers were willing to issue signed copies of the polling station tally sheets to candidate polling agents.

VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS AND COMMENTS

Recommendations

Voters' List. An accurate register of voters is essential, and there seem to be serious problems with the existing voter lists. The Election Commission should immediately undertake a major effort to update the nation's voters' list. Authorities must make sure to include the names of all legitimate voters and to delete the names of voters who have either died or were improperly placed on the list. Authorities could also consider introducing an identification card

system. While the cost of such a system would be considerable, a credible identification system could strengthen the electoral process.

Campaign Finances. The new parliament should attempt to develop a legislative consensus about appropriate limits on campaign spending. Such limits should be backed up by significant penalties and a willingness on the part of the executive authorities to enforce the limits. Unrealistic and/or unenforceable limitations on campaign spending can undermine confidence in the process.

Parallel Vote Count. Political parties and independent monitoring groups should develop the capability to collect and independently tabulate the results reported from each polling station. Such parallel vote counts would enable political parties and observer groups to verify the results released by the Election Commission. This should increase the confidence of the parties and the public in the process.

The government and election authorities should welcome and facilitate the creation of this capability. The Election Commission should reconsider its opposition to nonparty polling observers and should make sure that representatives of observer groups and polling agents at the local level receive copies of statements of the count (tally sheets). It is just as important for political parties and other interested groups to take advantage of their networks of agents and observers to obtain and report back the information necessary to conduct independent vote tabulations.

Independence of the Election Commission. Much stock has been placed in the neutrality of the interim government and the Election Commission. Future elections, however, are likely to take place under more partisan, elected governments and, potentially, in more polarized environments. Accordingly, the Election Commission must scrupulously maintain its independence. Moreover, sitting governments should be extremely sensitive to the need for the appearance, in addition to the reality, of a fully independent and effective Election Commission and electoral administration.

International Observers

The government of Bangladesh actively sought international observers, and several groups sent delegations. The Institute for Inter-Ethnic Studies in Colombo, Sri Lanka organized the largest delegation, made up of 30 members from the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). The Commonwealth Secretariat organized a 12-member delegation composed of members from Commonwealth countries. The British parliament sent a four-member delegation. Japan sent a nine-member delegation, which included six members of the Japanese parliament, two Foreign Ministry officials and the General-Secretary of the Japan-Bangladesh Friendship Committee. The European parliament also sent a representative. NDI's four-person team consulted with each of these groups.

The international observer groups approached their missions seriously and professionally, and they adopted methodologies that generally met the evolving international standards for election observing. Delegates arrived before the elections and met with representatives across the spectrum of Bangladeshi politics and society. Delegates were deployed around the country. After election day, the SAARC, Commonwealth, British and Japanese delegations issued public statements and held press conferences to announce their findings. None of these public statements was controversial because all of the groups made similar findings and were in accord in their overall conclusions.

The presence of international observers clearly had a salutary effect. They represented and observed on behalf of the international community, and they lent credibility to the process and the results.

Domestic Observers

The NDI team noted that, in contrast to their attitude toward international election observers, the government and the Election Commission attempted to discourage domestic observers. The Commission provided these groups with neither credentials nor access; indeed, it sent a directive to election officials throughout the country that implied that domestic observers should be barred.

The Election Commission was concerned that some groups were not impartial and was anxious about distinguishing among them. While this concern was presumably legitimate, the presence of independent observers, both domestic and foreign, has made a particularly significant contribution in countries where accreditation has been liberally issued. In some countries with a history of disputed elections, election laws expressly permit duly accredited organizations to have access to polling stations, subject to the power of presiding officers to impose reasonable restrictions in the interest of preserving order. Such laws typically require the election commission to accredit *bona fide* religious, civic, professional, trade, business and other nonpartisan organizations, including foreign observer groups, to monitor the voting and counting process. Election commissions issue identification cards to individuals associated with duly accredited groups.

The Election Commission's unwillingness to officially sanction domestic observers did not in practice prevent domestic organizations from observing the elections. Evidently, most presiding officers permitted representatives of such groups to ask questions and to observe the process at the polls. Nevertheless, the failure to provide of access for observers could hinder monitoring efforts in the future, ultimately having the potential to undermine hard-earned confidence in the elections and the democratic process.

Organizations interested in monitoring the electoral process can take measures to respond to the authorities' legitimate concerns. These groups should work to ensure that organizers and pollwatchers are well trained and impartial. On election day, pollwatchers must be careful not to slow down or interfere with the process at polling sites or to become a source of controversy

or intimidation. The excellent performance during the February elections of a number of Bangladeshi organizations should help allay official concerns.

Observer groups will also need to focus on their role in the post-election environment. They can potentially contribute to the consolidation of democracy in the country by developing civic education programs, overseeing the functions of governmental institutions, monitoring civilian-military relations, and maintaining a network of citizens engaged in public affairs and committed to democracy.

Tentative Thoughts about the Elections' Success

The Acting President repeatedly emphasized that the priority of his interim government was to pave a smooth path toward free elections. With the installation of the interim government in December 1990, Bangladesh suddenly had the chance to begin the process of institutionalizing a stable and lasting democracy.

Almost universally, citizens of Bangladesh praised the neutrality of the interim government. Before the elections, the NDI team heard a few complaints that the government was showing some favoritism to certain political parties -- generally the Awami League or the BNP or both -- in its local administration and other appointments. While the NDI team was not in a position to evaluate fully such claims, it seemed that the government was sincere in pursuing its mandate to conduct free and fair elections. Members of the Acting President's Council of Advisers, for example, undertook not to seek elected office for one year. Indeed, in discussions with NDI team members, several senior members of the government seemed almost eager to shed their government responsibilities as soon as free elections were held. And, in marked contrast to their attitudes a year earlier at the time of upazila elections, several high-ranking Election Commission staff members expressed a sense of professional fulfillment at having been able to discharge their duties without government or political interference.

Although Bangladesh is among the poorest and most densely populated nations in the world, its pluralistic society provides a basic foundation for a successful democracy. There are multiple political parties with popular support, a tradition of periodic elections, an independent bar and judiciary, and an election system that compares favorably with those in other democratic countries. In the mass movement to oust an authoritarian government and in the holding of free elections, students, political leaders, government officials, civil servants, lawyers, teachers, journalists, businessmen and others have demonstrated their commitment to democracy and free and fair elections.

Bangladesh has now held free, fair and open elections. The democratic process, however, remains fragile. Democratic gains must be consolidated and institutionalized. The parliament must now establish itself as a substantive, credible, democratic institution. The government must tolerate opposition and remain accountable to the public. Losing parties must play their role as a loyal opposition.

Unless the new parliament amends the Constitution, Bangladesh will hold presidential elections in the upcoming months. The country will be called upon to hold these and other future elections in a potentially more polarized atmosphere, when there is an elected, partisan government -- rather than a neutral caretaker administration -- in office. In this context, it will be essential for the Election Commission to scrupulously maintain its independence.

In order to support democratic consolidation in the period ahead, organizations that have focused on vote monitoring will need to turn their attention to civic education, oversight of government institutions, and promotion of healthy civil-military relations. As they do so, the Bangladesh experience should continue to serve as an impressive reminder of the universal aspiration for democratic government.

ANNEX

CONSULTATIONS AND MEETINGS

Survey and Training Mission, January 10-18, 1991
Election Observer Mission, February 24-March 1, 1991
Dhaka, Bangladesh

GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

The Honorable Shahabuddin Ahmed, Acting President
People's Republic of Bangladesh

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Fakhruddin Ahmed, Advisor for Foreign Affairs

Shamsher M. Chowdhury, Director General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

S.A. Jalal, Director (UN Liaison)

Mohamed Mijarul Quayes, Senior Assistant Secretary, International
Organizations Wing

Reaz Raman, Additional Foreign Secretary

M. Ziauddin, Director

Election Commission

Justice Mohammad Abdur Rouf, Chief Election Commissioner

Justice Naimuddin Ahmed,Election Commissioner

Justice Syed Mesbahuddin Hussain, Election Commissioner

Ayubur Rahman, Secretary

Faizur Razzak, Joint Secretary

S.M. Zakaria, Joint Secretary

POLITICAL PARTIES

Awami League

Sheikh Hasina, Chairperson
Dr. Kamal Hossain

Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP)

Dr. B. Chowdhury, Vice Chairperson
Nazmul Huda, Member, Central Committee

Jamaat-e-Islami

    Abdul Kader Mollah

Others

    Quat Il Islam, Workers Party

    Ubaidulla-bin-sayeed Jalalabadi, Chairperson, Bangladeshi Islami Biplabi Parishad Party

    Shafique Haidere Khan, Chairperson, International Solidarity for Peace

    Rashed Khan Menon, General Secretary, Workers Party

    Sheikh Sayayot Hossain Nilu, Chairperson, Progressive Nationalist Party

CIVIC AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

All Party Student's Unity (APSU)

    Md. Elais Ali, Central Member, Convening Committee, Jatiyatabai Chatradal

    Mir. Shorafat Ali Sopu, Vice President, Dhaka College Student Union

    Asadur Rahman Asad, General Secretary, Jaghpa Chatra League

    S.M. Asaduzzaman Ripon, President, Central Committee, Bangladesh Jatiotabadi Chatra Dal

    Sayedur Rahman Sayed, General Secretary, Mohosin Hall Student Union

The Asia Foundation

    Jon L. Summers, Representative

    Nilan Fernando, Program Officer

Association of Development Agencies of Bangladesh

    Dr. Huda, Director

    Iqbal Shailo, Senior Assistant Program Officer

Bangladesh Human Rights Commission

    Akram H. Chowhury, Secretary-General

    Md. Marnush Chowdhury

Bangladesh Movement for Free Elections (Bangladesh Mukto Nibachon Andolon-BMNA)

    Justice K.M. Subhan

    Farah Ghuznavi

    F.R. Mahmood Hasan, Executive Director, Gonoshahajjo Sangstha (GSS)

Tawfique Nawaz, Esq.
Babar Subhan

Bangladesh Samaj Unnayan Samity (BSUS)

S.M.H. Bokhari, Chief Executive
Anwarnl Azim

Bangladesh Society for the Enforcement of Human Rights (BSEHR)

Justice Kemaluddin Hossain
Mirza Haidar Ali
Sigma Huda, Advocate

Citizens Election Commission (CEC)

Md. Saifullah Chowdhury, President
S.M. Rahman

Coordinating Council for Human Rights in Bangladesh (CCHRB)

Rev. Fr. Richard W. Timm, President
Philip Gain, Director
Rumana Ahmed, Commission for Justice and Peace
Rosaline Costa, Human Rights Coordinator, Commission for Justice
    and Peace
Shishir Moral

Grameen Bank

Dr. Muhammed Yunus, Managing Director

Institute of Human Rights and Legal Affairs

Justice A. Rahman Chowdhury, President
K.H. Mahbubuddin Ahmed, President, High Court Bar
Shafiqul Islam Khan
Justice M.A. Malek
K.S. Nabi
Madim Rahman

OTHER INDIVIDUALS

Syed Ishtiaq Ahmed, Esq., Senior Advocate, Supreme Court of Bangladesh, Former President of the Bar Council

Feroz M. Hassan, Managing Director, Remians Business and Professional Forum

Senator Robert Hill, Australia

Tabarak Hussain, Former Ambassador to the United States

Syed Shah Tariquzzaman, Law Professor

JOURNALISTS

Shahabuddin Ahmed, Journalist, *Holiday*

Atiqul Alam, Bureau Chief, Reuters

Monjurul Ahsan Bulbul, *The Daily Sangbad*

Barbara Crossette, Chief of Bureau, *The New York Times*

Al-Haj S.M. Fakhruddin, *Weekly Citizen*

Sukalpa Gupta, *United News of Bangladesh*

Jehargir Hussain, Special Correspondent, *The Morning Sun*

Kazuhisa Inouye, Bureau Chief, New Delhi Bureau, Kyodo News Service - Japan

Syed Kamaluddin, *Far Eastern Economic Review*

Fazal Kamal, Editor, *Bangladesh Times*

Arnold Zeitlin, Vice President and General Manager, Asia/Pacific Division, United Press International

U.S. EMBASSY/ U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

United States Embassy

William B. Milam, Ambassador

Lee Coldren, Deputy Chief of Mission

Stephen R. Snow, First Secretary and Chief of the Political Section

Jon P. Dorschner, Second Secretary

Christopher Rich, Political Officer

Zia-ul-Haq, Political Assistant

K.S. Khadem, Senior Political Assistant

U.S. A.I.D.

Mary Kilgour, Director

Jan Rockliffe-King, NDI Liaison

Michael Walsh, Chief, Contract Office

Marion Warren, Program Officer
Frank Young, Director, Program Office

INTERNATIONAL ELECTION OBSERVER DELEGATIONS

Commonwealth Delegation

Jeremy Pope, Commonwealth Secretariat, Delegation Coordinator
Delegation Members

Japanese Delegation

Takeo Iguchi, Ambassador of Japan to Bangladesh
Hiroichi Fukuda, The House of Councillors
Tetsuo Inoue, The House of Councillors
K. Ito, Secretary-General, Japan-Bangladesh Friendship Association
Tetsuo Kitamura, The House of Councillors
Makoto Taneda, The House of Councillors
Takashi Tanihata, The House of Councillors
Kazuo Kitagawa, The House of Representatives

SAARC Delegation

Neelan Tiruchelvam, Director, I.C.E.S., Delegation Coordinator
Jeevan Thiagarjah, Assistant Director, I.C.E.S., Delegation Coordinator
Delegation Members