

POST-ELECTION STATEMENT**INTERNATIONAL DELEGATION TO
BULGARIAN NATIONAL ELECTIONS**

Sofia, Bulgaria
June 11, 1990

We are pleased to offer this preliminary statement on behalf of the international delegation organized jointly by the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs and the National Republican Institute for International Affairs. This delegation consists of 60 members from 23 countries, many of whom have participated in observer missions before and several of whom have been part of pre-election surveys here.

We divided into twelve teams over the weekend, eleven of which traveled to towns in the countryside for two-and-a-half days following intensive briefings in Sofia. These teams generally concentrated their observations in the smaller towns and villages, and stayed in touch with the delegation leadership which remained in Sofia. Altogether, we visited some 350 voting sections. We coordinated our schedule with the Bulgarian Association for Fair Elections, which mobilized more than 10,000 volunteers to establish a presence at most voting sections in the country. We have also cooperated with other international delegations in Bulgaria this week to maximize our effectiveness and coverage.

It is most important to note that our assessment of the election process in Bulgaria began with pre-election survey missions more than two months ago, and it is not yet completed. Some of our delegation and staff will remain in the country through next week's run-off elections, and we will later produce a comprehensive report on the entire process that has led to these elections. Yet it seems worthwhile to offer some preliminary judgements at this point, on the morning after the history-making elections of June 10.

Pre-election missions identified some of the hurdles relating to inequities in resources available to the various parties, inadequate administrative procedures and questions of intimidation and political pressure. The authorities were responsive to some of these concerns, and always accessible and cordial to our delegations. Yet the legacy of 45 years of what the country's present leaders acknowledge has been totalitarian rule cannot be forgotten in a few months, and in Bulgaria it has not been.

One of the most difficult issues which an observer delegation must consider is whether the voters were intimidated into voting a different way than their conscience would otherwise dictate. Overt intimidation -- written or verbal threats, a heavy and threatening military or police presence or actual physical abuse -- can be detected. But intimidation can also be psychological and sociological, a subtle but insidious deterrent to free voting that is not as visible. A long history of dictatorship can affect the behavior of a voting population. When this is the case, only the most aggressive reassurances by a government can overcome the fear people feel.

There were incidents on election day that could be interpreted as overt intimidation. The delegation heard about vote buying, a mayor who drove voters to the polls, letters sent from officials to voters, threats that voters would lose their pensions or jobs if the opposition won, military officers present at places where conscripts voted and voting booths arranged in such a way to convey the impression to voters that officials would know how people voted. In a democracy with some history, some of these examples might be considered benign. This is not the case in Bulgaria, a society that was until recently oppressed by its own government. Overall, we did not see intimidation of such a nature as to invalidate the national election, although we believe that investigations are necessary to determine whether irregularities affected the results of specific constituencies.

Given its modern history, it is difficult to detect intimidation in Bulgaria, and it is even more difficult to measure its effect in

votes. We can only say it was a factor. That is why we urged the government to reassure voters that they should have no fears because the ballot was secret. Though this was attempted by electoral authorities the day before the election, we must conclude that this was insufficient to overcome 45 years of harsh communist rule and the lack of a political culture disposed to free choice in the rural areas. In Sofia, by contrast, we witnessed a major attitudinal reversal over the three-month campaign and a freedom of expression which resembles any democratic capital.

A great deal has taken place in this country. Substantial negotiations in the Roundtable framework produced agreement on a wide variety of issues, large and small, including the procedures for these elections. Parties and other independent groups have formed and become active in many fields. The press has become freer and more diverse and, during the campaign, the major political parties were provided significant access to television.

Despite the challenges of preparing for an election in a short period of time, the Central Election Commission has been responsive to concerns raised by opposition parties and international observers in the past few weeks and as recently as the morning of election day. For instance, it was agreed that a parallel vote tabulation could be conducted by independent observers to enhance confidence in the officially reported results; it was decided that citizens could effectively register to vote on election day so as to minimize the exclusion of voters due to the poor quality of some voter registries; media time and other resources were provided to opposition parties and coalitions. In sum, despite the problems that existed throughout the campaign, all major parties were able to communicate their messages to the public.

An election has clearly taken place. This is a substantial accomplishment, and it indicates that Bulgaria is a very different place from what it was before the 10th of November 1989. A vital appreciation for the rule of law is growing and will further define the democratic character of the society when mature.

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The unfortunate reality that fear is still a factor in the country is not cause to invalidate this election. But it does mean that the government has a serious challenge to erase this fear so that there will be no doubt future elections will be decided by fully informed voters who feel free to vote their conscience.

We know that complaints have been filed with the Central Election Commission about significant irregularities. We have been assured by the Commission, the proper body for such questions, that these complaints will be investigated fully. This is important because a fair election process requires the vigorous investigation by a properly constituted body with the power and the inclination to prosecute violations. Even where it does not affect the outcome of a particular election, such investigations and prosecutions are necessary to ensure that the rule of law is upheld. We want to underscore that it is the government in power that has the responsibility to assure that this occurs. Moreover, the government needs to address itself visibly to the widespread fear that reprisals will be taken against opposition activists or voters. We see it as part of our role to continue our review during this post-election phase.

In conclusion, we would like to express our hope and our expectation that Bulgaria, a nation that has long been isolated from the world community and not always well treated by its neighbors, will find its democratic future strengthened by growing contacts with other nations. Many vital and difficult tasks remain to be addressed. These include political and social reforms, significant economic restructuring and a greater respect for the rights of minorities -- specifically, the Turkish community which has suffered a great deal and whose exile community was effectively disenfranchised. The local elections that are envisioned for later in the year will provide a further opportunity for Bulgaria to demonstrate that political pluralism can be a meaningful reality for a society in transition.

Nations that observe and respect well established international human rights standards find themselves more warmly welcomed by

the expanding democratic world community. As a first step in that process, we hope that all contesting parties will make clear as soon as possible their intention to cooperate in the further development of democratic institutions in this country.

STATEMENT BY NDI POST-ELECTION FACT-FINDING MISSION

Sofia, Bulgaria
June 18, 1990

For the past three months, the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) has been monitoring closely the Bulgarian electoral process. Three pre-election fact-finding missions visited the country between April 23 and June 1, and NDI co-sponsored a 60-member international delegation that observed the June 10 elections for Bulgaria's Grand National Assembly. Consistent with the approach developed during this period, NDI maintained a mission in Bulgaria from the June 10 round of voting through the second round on June 17. The following individuals participated in this mission:

- LARRY GARBER (U.S.), NDI's senior consultant for electoral processes and author of *Guidelines for International Election Observing*;
- DANNY MCDONALD (U.S.), Commissioner on the U.S. Federal Election Commission and advisor to the OAS observer mission in Nicaragua 1989-90;
- THOMAS MELIA (U.S.), NDI Program Director; and
- TIBOR VIDOS (Hungary), Executive Director of the Alliance of Free Democrats (SZDSZ).

All participated in pre-election fact-finding missions organized by NDI and were members of the international delegation to the June 10 elections. As in previous missions, they were assisted by NDI's representative in Bulgaria, Gerald Mitchell, and NDI's Eastern European Program Coordinator, Lisa McLean.

The tasks assigned to this mission included: a) examining the official tabulation of results following voting on June 10; b) evaluating the manner in which the Central Election Commission addressed complaints arising from the conduct of voting on June 10 and the tabulation thereafter, whether filed by parties,

individuals or independent bodies; c) monitoring administrative preparations for the second round of voting on June 17; d) assessing the political situation in Bulgaria during this period; e) observing the voting on June 17 and the initial tabulation of results; and f) preparing this report on the mission's activities and conclusions.

From June 11 to June 16, interviews were conducted in Sofia with commissioners and expert advisors at the Central Election Commission (CEC), political party leaders, and the senior staff of the Bulgarian Association for Fair Elections (BAFE). On June 17, the team coordinated its activity with BAFE and other international observers in Bulgaria, visiting polling places and counting centers in the Sofia, Plovdiv and Velingrad regions, where contests has been especially close or where complaints had arisen during the first round.

The following observations supplement and update previous mission statements:

1) The CEC is to be congratulated for the important contribution it has made in administering in a diligent and nonpartisan manner the entire election process. In a short period of time, the Commission developed a system, which while not free from flaws, provided Bulgarians an opportunity to cast a secret ballot in a multi-party election. The impreciseness of the election law has made inevitable the need to modify constantly the applicable procedures. This occurred also during the week between the first and second round of elections, causing confusion and inconsistencies at the polling sites. The final delegation report will include recommendations regarding specific aspects of the election law and procedures.

2) After careful review of the major complaints presented formally or informally by the political parties and BAFE regarding the first round of the elections, the mission concludes that the irregularities and inconsistencies seem not to have materially affected the official results of the June 10 elections as released by the CEC. This conclusion is reinforced by the fact that the

national results obtained by the BAFE parallel vote tabulation are virtually identical to the national results released by the CEC.

Further, no party has presented conclusive evidence demonstrating that tampering occurred in the reporting or tabulating of the results for individual parties or candidates. The majority of complaints presented by the Union of Democratic Forces (UDF) concern discrepancies between the number of valid votes recorded at a particular polling site and the cumulated number of votes for all the parties. However, these discrepancies are explicable by the fact that not all voters cast ballots in both the multi-member and single-member elections, and were caused by misunderstandings and inadequate instructions regarding the counting of invalid ballots and empty envelopes. Significantly, in the vast majority of cases, the representatives of all the political parties present at the polling site signed the protocol without comment.

Finally, with respect to the announcement of the results, the mission does not believe that there were unwarranted or inordinate delays, despite the expectation that the results would be available Monday afternoon. The tabulation of results and official announcements were made on Tuesday, June 12, for the single member constituencies, and on Thursday, June 14, for the multi-member constituencies. Particularly in view of the novelty of the election system in Bulgaria, the official counting was accomplished rather expeditiously, while permitting adequate oversight to ensure that no manipulations had occurred. In this regard, it is important to note that suspicions concerning possible manipulation were greatly alleviated by the early release of unofficial results generated by the parallel vote tabulations referred to above.

3) Notwithstanding concerns about irregularities on June 10 and the complaints that have been submitted, the principal political forces have acknowledged the legitimacy of the results as reported and those who qualified participated actively in the run-off election on June 17. The political parties and BAFE are to be congratulated for attempting to document the irregularities that

occurred on June 10 and to present them to the authorities. However, as the international delegation noted in its statement, only if the submissions are handled meaningfully, in accordance with the appropriate procedures, will confidence in the government system and respect for the rule of law develop in Bulgaria.

To date, complaints regarding irregularities of June 10, including allegations of intimidation, have been submitted to the CEC by the four major parties that will be represented in the Grand National Assembly and by BAFE. Some of these complaints have been addressed by the CEC, and its decisions in at least two cases have been upheld by the Supreme Court. Other complaints, pursuant to Article 78 of the Election Law, will be considered by the Election Verification Commission established by the Grand National Assembly. While the rules for the operation of this Commission are not yet clear, the mission expects that appropriate procedures will be developed in the same spirit of mutual respect that was evident during the round-table process.

4) At this point in time, it is difficult to reach definitive conclusions regarding the conduct of the June 17 elections. In all polling sites visited, the political parties and other civic organizations were present in large numbers. There were few complaints regarding the administrative preparations to the runoff, a considerable accomplishment given the brief period following the announcement of the first round results. However, there were complaints, once again, regarding intimidation and election day campaigning.

The most serious problem observed by the mission was the constituency of Rakitovo, where individuals sought to vote with certificates provided by local officials, but without valid passports. There appears to be no authority for the issuance of these certificates and, despite objections, individuals holding these certificates were allowed to vote in the June 10 elections. This matter has now been presented formally to the CEC. If it is determined that this abuse materially affected the result in this constituency, where the Minister of Interior is a candidate, then a

new election might be necessary. In any event, this matter and other allegations in this region should be fully investigated by the appropriate authorities.

5) The June 17 runoff elections mark a further positive step in Bulgaria's transition to democracy. However, as previous missions have emphasized, considerable work is still required for a modern, pluralist political culture to materialize. Regardless of who actually leads or participates in the next government, the presence of two large parties and two smaller parties in the Grand National Assembly which is responsible for drafting a new constitution within 18 months, should ensure that issues fundamental to the future of Bulgarian society are debated with vigor. The experience with a free press and other forms of free expression during the campaign also will contribute to Bulgaria's democratic development. Finally, the emergence of civic organizations such as the Bulgarian Association for Fair Elections, which again fielded thousands of volunteers and conducted a highly credible parallel vote tabulation, provides cause for optimism that Bulgaria's long tradition of nondemocratic rule is drawing to a close.

(For further information, please contact Gerald Mitchell in Bulgaria, local phone 520-358 or in Washington, Thomas Melia, 202/328-3136)

POST-ELECTION STATEMENT**NRIIA INTERNATIONAL DELEGATION
TO THE BULGARIAN RUN-OFF ELECTIONS**

Sofia, Bulgaria
June 18, 1990

We are an international delegation sponsored by the National Republican Institute for International Affairs. We are part of a larger group that last week observed Bulgaria's national elections. These remarks are offered as our preliminary impressions of the 17 June run-off elections. Furthermore, by means of this statement, we wish to re-emphasize the conclusion of last week's delegation, as well as add points to our own.

Four teams consisting of two delegates each remained in-country for the final voting. Using Sofia and Rousse as their base of operations, the teams witnessed a broad cross-section of both rural and urban voting. Delegation members witnessed the balloting, counting and tabulation process throughout the day.

The three essential elements that must be examined in an effective election observation are the environmental factors surrounding the conduct of the campaign, the balloting mechanics, and the counting/tabulation process.

The administration and execution of the voting and counting/tabulation were found by this delegation to be largely free of any systematic or centralized fraud. However, delegation members witnessed and heard accusations by various parties of localized irregularities. Some such irregularities were undoubtedly due to the unfamiliarity of the voting process. The delegation feels, however, based on conversations with various voters, that some irregularities were the result of intentional misconduct.

The delegation's greatest concern lies with the conduct of the pre-election campaign. When questioned by observers, voters often responded that election day conditions were "normal." Upon

further questioning, it was found that voters cautiously revealed they were being subjected to various forms of intimidation, both subtle and overt. Overt intimidation--direct threats of the loss of jobs, housing, and educational opportunities, as well as physical harm--was alleged in many of the polling stations visited. The subtle intimidation comes as a result of a country oppressed by its own government for forty-five years. Inaction by the government in assuring the population that their vote would be truly secret, we feel, affected the actual vote of many Bulgarians. This type of subtle intimidation was particularly evident in rural areas, where local officials can often communicate their positions to the voters without the need for explicit oral or written statements.

The delegation is further concerned with the inequity in the allocation of campaign resources. Opposition candidates and parties had little time to prepare a viable organization and few means to communicate their message to the electorate. Taken in contrast with the vast state resources available to the ruling party, the delegation cannot declare the campaign environment to have been completely fair.

We have great respect for individual Bulgarian voters who offered their impressions to our delegation, often in the presence of those who represented the ruling party. We congratulate the people of Bulgaria for their willingness to participate in their first step toward democracy. We urge all persons concerned with the democratic future of Bulgaria to continue with the process so recently begun.

All individual members of this delegation wish to thank the Bulgarian people for their warm Bulgarian-Slavic hospitality.

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OFFICIAL RESULTS FROM THE CENTRAL ELECTION COMMISSION BY REGION

| REGION | BSP | UDF | BANU | MRF |
|------------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|
| Blagoevgrad | 41.12% | 41.03% | 7.36% | 8.45% |
| Bourgas | 47.35 | 33.94 | 7.55 | 8.32 |
| Varna | 42.83 | 41.63 | 8.75 | 3.85 |
| Veliko Turnovo | 50.13 | 35.93 | 12.27 | .00 |
| Vidin | 62.10 | 29.69 | 6.83 | .00 |
| Vratsa | 58.55 | 29.37 | 10.30 | .00 |
| Gabrovo | 39.66 | 42.33 | 14.56 | 1.34 |
| Kurdzhali | 18.38 | 6.14 | 2.39 | 64.92 |
| Kustendil | 51.51 | 37.21 | 9.58 | .00 |
| Lovech | 46.70 | 38.42 | 12.11 | 1.39 |
| Mihajlovgrad | 59.27 | 29.15 | 9.74 | .00 |
| Pazardjik | 51.00 | 34.19 | 8.65 | 3.94 |
| Pernik | 49.63 | 41.49 | 6.58 | .00 |
| Pleven | 52.80 | 35.11 | 8.84 | 2.04 |
| Plovdiv | 43.61 | 45.41 | 6.62 | 2.09 |
| Razgrad | 38.33 | 9.49 | 4.84 | 38.65 |
| Rousse | 43.96 | 36.16 | 9.27 | 8.24 |
| Silistra | 50.60 | 12.47 | 7.63 | 27.21 |
| Sliven | 57.41 | 32.79 | 6.90 | .00 |
| Smolyan | 50.69 | 30.91 | 13.19 | 3.47 |
| Sofia (city) | 38.90 | 53.78 | 4.57 | .00 |
| Sofia (district) | 47.36 | 37.83 | 12.78 | .00 |
| Stara Zagora | 50.83 | 38.57 | 7.15 | 1.39 |
| Tolbuhin | 54.58 | 22.26 | 10.15 | 10.71 |
| Turgovishte | 54.62 | 15.73 | 8.34 | 19.50 |
| Haskovo | 52.90 | 27.49 | 7.53 | 7.74 |
| Sumen | 50.47 | 16.36 | 7.97 | 21.16 |
| Yambol | 58.84 | 31.27 | 8.50 | .00 |
| TOTAL* | 47.15% | 36.20% | 8.03% | 6.03% |

**"OTHERS" = 2.59%

Appendix XIII

**APPORTIONMENT OF SEATS
 IN THE GRAND NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
 AS DETERMINED BY THE CENTRAL ELECTION COMMISSION
 FINAL SECOND ROUND RESULTS**

| Party Name | Prop. Percent | Prop. Seats | Maj. Seats | Total Seats |
|---------------|------------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|
| BSP | 47.15 | 97 | 114 | 211 |
| UDF | 36.20 | 75 | 69 | 144 |
| BANU | 8.03 | 16 | 0 | 16 |
| RFM | 6.03 | 12 | 11 | 23 |
| OTHERS | 2.59 | 0 | 6 | 6 |
| | — | — | — | — |
| TOTALS | 100.00 | 200 | 200 | 400 |

Prop. = proportional

Maj. = majority

**BAFE AND INFAS PARALLEL VOTE RESULTS
COMPARED WITH OFFICIAL RESULTS**

| Party | BAFE | INFAS | Official |
|--------------|-------------|--------------|-----------------|
| BSP | 46.99% | 48.5% | 47.15% |
| UDF | 36.13% | 32.3% | 36.20% |
| BANU | 8.19% | 8.1% | 8.03% |
| MRF | 6.31% | 8.7% | 6.03% |

Appendix XIV

BAFE RESULTS BY PARTY
AS OF JUNE 10, 1990 AT 11:14 PM
(announced on television)

Number of protocols received: 290, representing 22.29% of the sample.
Number of registered voters: 124,164, representing 20.026% of the sample.

| Party | Number of Votes | Percentage |
|---|-----------------|------------|
| Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP) | 50,603 | 46.66% |
| Union of Democratic Forces (UDF) | 36,997 | 34.11 |
| Bulgarian Agrarian National Union (BANU) | 8,813 | 8.13 |
| Movement for Rights and Freedom (MRF) | 8,730 | 8.05 |
| National Labor Party | 1,246 | 1.15 |
| Alternative Socialist Association (ASO) | 264 | 0.24 |
| Alternative Socialist Party (ASP) | 465 | 0.43 |
| Bulgarian National Radical Party | 85 | 0.08 |
| Bulgarian National Democratic Party | 123 | 0.11 |
| Bulgarian Revolutionary Youth Party | 14 | 0.01 |
| Bulgarian Christian Democratic Party | 38 | 0.04 |
| Non-Party for Democrats | 163 | 0.15 |
| United Peoples League | 7 | 0.01 |
| Liberal Party | 161 | 0.15 |
| National Party of Labor (POP) | 5 | 0.00 |
| National Patriotic Movement | 7 | 0.01 |
| Organization of Heart Disease | 15 | 0.01 |
| Parliamentary Movement for Restoration of Turnovo Constitution | 133 | 0.12 |
| Political Opposition Bloc | 121 | 0.11 |
| Republican Party | 0 | 0.00 |
| Free Democratic Party | 10 | 0.01 |
| Social Democratic Party - Non-Marxist | 38 | 0.04 |
| Union of Non-Party Members | 105 | 0.10 |
| Union of Non-Party Warrants | 32 | 0.03 |
| "ERA-3" | 54 | 0.05 |
| Union of Handicapped Persons | 167 | 0.15 |
| Christian Republican Party | 55 | 0.05 |
| Spoiled Ballots | 2,920 | 2.69% |
| Actual Voters | 112,461 | 90.57% |

BAFE RESULTS BY REGION

| Region | BSP | UDF | BANU | MRF |
|------------------|--------|--------|-------|-------|
| Blagoevgrad | 42.23% | 45.44% | 6.77% | 3.88% |
| Bourgas | 49.42 | 32.73 | 6.86 | 7.87 |
| Varna | 43.28 | 40.52 | 10.07 | 3.43 |
| Veliko Tarnovo | 51.78 | 33.66 | 13.00 | .00 |
| Vidin | 64.78 | 26.73 | 7.33 | .00 |
| Vratsa | 58.46 | 28.66 | 11.11 | .00 |
| Gabrovo | 39.42 | 39.10 | 17.45 | 1.94 |
| Kurdzhali | 17.57 | 4.72 | 4.34 | 66.43 |
| Kustendil | 56.21 | 31.60 | 11.00 | .00 |
| Lovech | 45.29 | 40.52 | 11.16 | 2.06 |
| Mihajlovgrad | 56.59 | 31.50 | 9.92 | .00 |
| Pazardjik | 56.11 | 31.90 | 8.83 | 1.10 |
| Pernik | 50.28 | 40.18 | 7.86 | .00 |
| Pleven | 55.19 | 32.18 | 9.49 | 2.06 |
| Plovdiv | 44.18 | 46.69 | 6.27 | .97 |
| Razgrad | 26.91 | 7.62 | 3.41 | 57.21 |
| Rousse | 44.46 | 37.77 | 9.72 | 6.16 |
| Silistra | 55.02 | 10.52 | 7.46 | 24.70 |
| Sliven | 60.06 | 28.33 | 7.70 | .00 |
| Smolyan | 38.76 | 39.28 | 10.07 | 10.44 |
| Sofia (city) | 38.89 | 53.83 | 4.58 | .00 |
| Sofia (district) | 47.50 | 36.93 | 13.21 | .00 |
| Stara Zagora | 52.32 | 37.62 | 6.05 | 2.19 |
| Tolbuhin | 51.25 | 26.85 | 9.28 | 10.07 |
| Turgovishte | 59.00 | 16.51 | 9.46 | 13.37 |
| Haskovo | 53.17 | 28.74 | 7.05 | 7.47 |
| Sumen | 51.34 | 14.24 | 7.41 | 23.25 |
| Yambol | 57.90 | 30.71 | 10.25 | .00 |

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, Brazil, Chile, Czechoslovakia, Haiti, Hungary, Nicaragua, Northern Ireland, Panama, Pakistan, the Philippines, Poland, Romania, Senegal, South Korea, Taiwan, and Uruguay.

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The National Republican Institute for International Affairs was established in December 1983 to enable the Republican Party of the United States to carry out programs of international development. The Republican Institute is committed to the belief that free, competitive, and sound political parties are cornerstone institutions within any democratic society. The primary objective of the Institute is to foster the process of democratic self-rule through closer ties and cooperative programs with political parties and other non-governmental organizations overseas.

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