



# NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTE FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

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## M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Media Covering the December 14, 1989 elections in Chile

FROM: Martin Edwin Andersen, NDI director for Latin American and Caribbean programs

RE: NDI Election Study/Observation Mission

DATE: November 18, 1989

### SUMMARY

The National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) is planning to send a 30-member international delegation to the December 14, 1989 presidential and legislative elections. The delegation's presence will help promote a free and fair election in what is Chile's first competitive, multi-party contest since the 1973 coup. It will also demonstrate continued support for the democratic transition underway in Chile, as well as provide an opportunity to learn from successful Chilean experiences as they unfolded before, during and after the historic October 1988 plebiscite.

The enclosed briefing materials have been selected to give you an idea of the central tenets and scope of NDI's democratic development efforts in more than 30 nations and four continents. We look forward to meeting with you in Santiago.

### BACKGROUND

Elections provide an opportunity to strengthen institutions fundamental to a democratic society -- specifically, political parties, the elections administrators and the media. NDI's involvement in election monitoring reflects a recognition that free and fair elections are a critical element to the viability of a democratic system.

During the past four years, NDI-sponsored observer missions have played critical roles in supporting the election processes in Chile, Pakistan and Paraguay, and in exposing and documenting the frauds that occurred in the Philippines, Haiti and Panama. This has been accomplished through the development of a unique approach that combines the following elements: pre-election monitoring of the political environment and critical assessment of the law and procedures; the sending of high profile delegations for the elections; nationwide coverage of a representative

*conducting nonpartisan international programs to help maintain and strengthen democratic institutions*

number of polling sites; careful scrutiny of the counting and tabulation processes; release of a preliminary statement 24-48 hours after polls close; and publication of a comprehensive report on the entire process.

Based on previous experiences, NDI has identified ways in which election observers can support the democratic process. First, the presence of observers -- and particularly advance knowledge in the country that they will be present -- encourages political parties and volunteers to participate in the process. Second, through review of the law and administrative procedures, election observers can either recommend improvements or increase the level of confidence in the electoral process, or both. Third, the presence of observers at polling stations and during the counting process deters misconduct and intimidation. Fourth, the reporting -- if warranted -- of whatever fraud occurs, contributes to the delegitimization of those responsible for the fraud.

Election observer missions also provide excellent opportunities to demonstrate the potential of using an election process to initiate peaceful democratic reform. For that reason, NDI often invites individuals from countries in transition to participate in election observer missions. Indeed, the 1987 mission to observe the Philippine legislative elections was designed for this purpose, although the delegation's in-country activities were similar to traditional observer missions.

For the 1987 Philippine elections, NDI invited nationals of Bangladesh, Haiti, Chile, Korea, Panama, Pakistan, Paraguay and Taiwan to participate in the delegation. Many of the individuals returned to their respective countries inspired by the Philippine experience in election reform and monitoring and, more importantly, with specific ideas that they sought to implement in their respective countries. For example: Jose Miguel Barros of Chile became a leader of the Committee for Free Elections (CEL) which played a critical role in ensuring the fairness of the October 5, 1988 plebiscite; Jean Claude Roi, in his role as technical advisor to the provisional election commission in Haiti, introduced a voter registration system based on the Philippine model; Aurelio Barria of Panama organized the National Civic Crusade, modeled on NAMFREL. Barria became its first chairman, before being exiled; Father Fernando Guardia, also of Panama, stimulated church involvement in encouraging fair elections and played a critical role in establishing a church-sponsored "quick count" operation.

On December 14, 1989 Chileans will elect a president and members of a national legislature in accordance with the 1980 constitution and subsequent modifications approved in the July 1989 constitutional referendum.

Parties from across the political spectrum are participating in the elections. The newly-elected government will assume office in March 1990, and will immediately be confronted with a host of difficult decisions. In this environment, the support and understanding of the international community will be an important factor.

For the past three years, NDI has played a major role in assisting Chileans in their efforts to restore their once-proud democracy. In May 1987, four Chileans from different political parties participated in the NDI-sponsored international observer delegation for the Philippine legislative elections. The Institute also supported efforts of various free election groups and provided technical advice on polling, organization, monitoring and media.

For the October plebiscite, NDI organized a 55-member international delegation. The delegation, which included members from five continents, was led by former Spanish president Adolfo Suarez, former Colombian president Misael Pastrana, former Arizona governor Bruce Babbitt, and Peter Dailey, an ambassador and special envoy in the Reagan administration. Not surprisingly, given its composition, the NDI delegation was afforded widespread press coverage both in Chile and abroad, before and after the plebiscite. Following the vote, NDI published a 126-page report that described the delegation's observations, in addition to providing information on the Chilean political and electoral processes.

The Chile observer delegation was organized in a manner that reflects NDI's commitment to the electoral process as a means of encouraging peaceful and democratic change. The entire process was monitored, not just events on election day. The delegation observed the plebiscite in metropolitan Santiago, as well as 10 of Chile's provinces. The delegation focused attention on the tabulation process, keeping its observers in the field until the counting at the regional level was for the most part complete.

#### PLAN OF ACTION

For the upcoming elections in Chile, NDI is inviting 30 election officials, political party leaders and representatives of civic organizations from 16 countries to participate in an international observer delegation. The invitees, many of whom will be from countries that are initiating or in the midst of a political transition process, will be able to study the successful Chilean experience in election administration and monitoring, civic education, coalition building and grass roots

organizing. In this regard, the observer mission is patterned after the NDI-sponsored program of the May 1987 Philippine legislative elections. As true of all NDI delegations, the U.S. component will be bipartisan.

The delegation will arrive in Chile on Sunday, December 10. Monday, December 11 will be devoted to briefings by NDI staff as well as a review by key Chilean participants in the 1988 plebiscite process. The latter will include subjects such as the decision to participate in the process, getting out the vote and the maintenance of unity by key Chilean participants. Tuesday will be devoted to presentations on the current electoral process, the state of the Chilean economy, developments since the plebiscite (i.e. negotiations leading to constitutional reform) and the position of the political parties. Speakers will include the director of the Electoral Service, representatives of the political parties, and government officials.

On Wednesday, the delegation will divide into six teams that will be assigned respectively to Antofagasta, Valparaiso, Concepción, Temuco, Puerto Montt and Santiago. Upon arrival in their assigned regions, the teams will meet with local election officials, candidates for the legislature, and political party and civic leaders.

On Thursday, election day, the teams will visit polling sites in their assigned regions. They also will observe the counting process at polling sites and regional centers.

Friday there will be a debriefing in Santiago, following which the delegation leader will present to the media a statement on behalf of the delegation.

On Saturday, there will be a day-long roundtable discussion amongst the delegation members and prominent Chileans. The themes of the roundtable will be the lessons to be learned from the Chilean transition process and the extent to which those lessons are applicable in other countries. A delegation report, which will cover both the delegation's observations and a summary of the discussion at the Saturday roundtable, will be prepared by the NDI staff and published in the early part of 1990.

#### PROPOSED OUTCOMES

The NDI-organized international delegation hopes to accomplish the following goals:

1. to support free and fair elections in Chile, through the presence of a high-profile international

delegation conducting a credible election observation mission;

2. to demonstrate continued international support for the democratization process in Chile;

3. to provide an opportunity to learn from the Chilean experience various lessons that may have applicability in other parts of the world, and

4. to publish and distribute a delegation report on the electoral process in Chile and on the lessons applicable to other countries in transition.

#### CONTACTS IN CHILE

The NDI delegation will stay at the Hotel Plaza de San Francisco, Avenida Libertador Bernardo O'Higgins 816, Santiago; Telef. 39-4413; FAX 39-7826, or telex, 241359. You may contact Martin Andersen there after December 7. Ken Wollack, NDI Executive Director, will be arriving December 10.