



# NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTE FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

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## STATEMENT BY THE INTERNATIONAL OBSERVER DELEGATION TO THE CZECH AND SLOVAK FEDERATIVE REPUBLIC ELECTIONS PRAGUE, JUNE 10, 1990

We are an international delegation composed of 64 individuals from 12 nations who have assembled in the Czech and Slovak Federative Republic to witness the first free multi-party elections in over 40 years. Our delegation is sponsored by the National Republican and National Democratic Institutes for International Affairs. The Institutes have extensive experience in observing elections throughout the world, including the Philippines, Panama, Haiti, Chile, Nicaragua, Yugoslavia, Hungary, and most recently Romania.

Our delegation has been present for indeed a most important historic event, and we have been deeply moved by what we have seen. Despite decades of totalitarian rule the people of this great nation have turned out in huge numbers to cast their ballots, and in so doing they have taken a major step forward on the difficult road to democracy.

President Havel has noted that nations which have not experienced political oppression can learn a great deal from nations such as Czechoslovakia. These elections, which have shown an exhilaration for democracy, should indeed teach us all a greater appreciation for the rights and responsibilities of a democratic society which are too often taken for granted in many of our own countries.

In order to establish a truly national perspective our delegation divided into 11 teams in nine cities and moved extensively throughout the country on the election days. Our conclusions are based on the aggregation of the reports received from these teams which observed the voting in over 200 polling stations on Friday and Saturday. Our conclusions are as follows:

(1) We believe that these elections have been free and fair and that the international community should respect and support the results.

(2) While there are some imperfections and irregularities in all electoral systems, particularly those that are experiencing their first free multi-party elections in over 40 years, we saw no major irregularities or fraud which would detract from the validity of the final results. The delegation witnessed an orderly, calm, and peaceful electoral environment the past two days. The festive atmosphere surrounding the election bore witness to the commitment of the people to the values of democracy, and the cooperation of representatives of the various political parties on the ward commissions was another example of this spirit.

(3) Finally, we applaud the enthusiastic and extraordinarily high voter turnout, which indicates to us that the people of this republic have placed great faith in the democratic system, and suggests that the historic democratic traditions of the people have survived despite 40 years of totalitarian rule.

We congratulate the election authorities, the government of the Czech and Slovak Federative Republic, and most importantly the people of the Czech lands and Slovakia on this historic election. While the journey to democracy is not yet complete, it is clearly evident that the people of this republic have embarked on a historic course to build a democratic nation. The road ahead will be difficult, but the government that emerges from this election will have a clear mandate and a strong democratic base from which to begin its work.

Among the challenges to be faced are the consequences of four decades of communist domination, and the need to deal effectively and fairly with those whose previous activity was clearly anti-democratic. It will be critical for all parties in the process to establish procedures and norms to ensure that these matters are dealt with fairly and with regard to the process.

This has been historic and moving experience for us all, and we wish the people of the Czech and Slovak Federative Republic the greatest of success as they rejoin the community of democratic nations.