

Czechoslovakia: Electoral Processes (Final Report)

Summary

NDI organized a February 1990 seminar on organizing techniques for eight leaders of Civic Forum and Public Against Violence in Washington. Subsequently, NDI sponsored trips to Czechoslovakia to lay the groundwork for major political training seminars in March and April and to assess the electoral system and political atmosphere before the June elections.

Background

Following popular protests in November 1989, the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia ceded partial power to democratic activists and agreed to enter a coalition transition government that would liberalize society and restore pluralism. A key part of the coalition agreement was the installation of Vaclav Havel as president.

Immediately after his inauguration, President Havel announced that a democratic election would be held in Czechoslovakia in June 1990. Using the 1946 electoral law as a basis, a group of lawyers under the auspices of the Academy of Sciences worked to produce a new electoral law.

NDI sent a survey team to Prague, headed by Dr. Madeleine Albright, on January 8-17, 1990. During a visit with President Havel, he requested that NDI send a group of election experts immediately to advise the designated experts in drafting a new electoral law. NDI, using program development funds, sent four elections experts in mid-January to consult with the Czechoslovak government and to develop follow-on programs. They were Peter Hack, a Hungarian lawyer and participant in his country's 1989 roundtable negotiations on election structure; Richard Holme, the founding director of the U.K.'s Electoral Reform Society; Antonio Vittorino, a Judge from Portugal's Constitutional Court; and Larry Garber, NDI's Senior Consultant on Election Processes.

Election laws are never substantively neutral; laws designed differently have different impacts on a wide range of crucial factors in any election, ranging from voter participation to the number of competing parties. The Czechoslovaks, working to balance these issues, requested NDI's assistance in educating those drafting the law by introducing them to experts from nations with a variety of perspectives. NDI wanted to expose them to experts from nations with a variety of perspectives.

Program Objectives

The original program had two objectives: 1) To provide additional expert advice to the government of Czechoslovakia on ways to refine the electoral system, and 2) to encourage broad voter participation by providing Czechoslovakia's political parties with training that would enable them to mobilize popular involvement in unfamiliar democratic elections.

In March, NDI received additional money for work in Czechoslovakia from an AID/NED grant. Subsequently, the objectives for the political training grant were altered to provide support for activities being carried out under the AID/NED grant.

Relation to Endowment Purposes

The program encouraged the development of a free and fair electoral system in Czechoslovakia, provided support for the training of emerging democratic political parties and organizations, and made possible future work of U.S. political parties with Czechoslovak political organizations, including parties and non-partisan groups.

Project Activities

On February 19, NDI organized a seminar in Washington, D.C. for eight leaders of the Civic Forum (CF), Public Against Violence (PAV), and the Social Democratic Party. The four seminar sessions dealt with such subjects as political communications, survey research, grass roots organizing and campaign management.

As a follow-up, NDI sent Patricia Keefer, Project Director, and Michael McAdams, a political organizing specialist working pro bono for NDI, to Czechoslovakia from March 17 to March 22 to design a seminar series for one hundred local branch organizers from the CF/PAV.

Consulting fees and administrative support for other NDI projects in Czechoslovakia were covered under this grant.

At the September 1990 NED Board meeting, NDI presented a proposal for reprogramming \$28,128.00 from this program's original \$39,207.00 budget.

Evaluation/Accomplishments

The project was successful in laying the groundwork for implementation of measures to strengthen democratic institutions and the election system. The seminar in Washington provided important initial training to Civic Forum, Public Against Violence, and Social Democratic leaders that aided their organization in the days immediately after the Revolution and was integral in laying the groundwork for subsequent NDI/NRI party-building seminars in Czechoslovakia.

Czechoslovakia: Political Training (Final Report)

Summary

In March, NDI provided the Association for Independent Social Analysis with expert consultation for the development of a public opinion survey of Czechoslovakia in the run-up to the June election. One month later, NDI sent a team of international trainers to the Czech Republic to assist with the training of campaign managers and candidates of Civic Forum (CF). Following the elections, two NDI staff members visited Prague to assess the development of political institutions and to explore follow-on work. NDI also supplied President Havel with a word processor during the summer of 1990 to enhance his ability to communicate with the public.

Background

Following popular protests in November 1989, the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia ceded partial power to democratic activists and agreed to enter a coalition transition government that would liberalize society and restore pluralism. A key part of the coalition agreement was the installation of Vaclav Havel as president.

NDI sent a survey team to Czechoslovakia January 8 to 17, 1990 to assess the fast-changing political situation. Dr. Madeleine Albright, NDI Vice Chair, and Thomas O. Melia, Program Director, were joined by Ellen Globokar, a campaign expert and Administrative Assistant to U.S. Senator Brock Adams.

They arrived in Prague only days after the inauguration of Vaclav Havel as President of the country and were given full access to the new government, the Civic Forum, and other political groups and parties. President Havel told the delegation that he was familiar with NDI's work in Eastern Europe and requested immediate assistance in drafting an electoral law and in political training for emerging political organizations, which at the time were principally united under the two umbrella movements, CF and PAV. The Civic Forum and other groups reiterated this request and asked that NDI begin the training as soon as possible.

Program Objectives

The goal of the program was to provide political training and public opinion information to the spectrum of Czechoslovakia's emerging democratic parties and movements and to increase their ability to attract voter support. Work was also

undertaken to maintain NDI's working relationship with democratic organizations.

Relation to Endowment Purposes

The goal of the NDI program was to improve Czechoslovakia's electoral system and the effectiveness of political parties, to aid the development of democratic government institutions, and to promote cooperation between U.S. political parties and their Czech and Slovak counterparts. The post-election work was aimed at improving the efficiency of the Czechoslovak Federal Assembly.

Project Activities

In March, Peter Hart, an expert on public opinion surveys, travelled to Prague to consult with the Association for Independent Social Analysis on the development of a public opinion survey. The survey, called "Czechoslovakia -- May 1990", was to measure the attitudes of Czechs and Slovaks toward the political and economic conditions in the month before the election. The survey was carried out with money made available to NDI by the special NED/AID appropriation.

In cooperation with the NRIIA, NDI developed a party-building program in Czechoslovakia, which it implemented in April and May. NDI organized training seminars for the Civic Forum/Public Against Violence and the respective parties running under their umbrella, while NRIIA organized sessions with the other major democratic parties.

From April 9 to 11, NDI sponsored a seminar on political organization in Marianske Lazne that was attended by ninety regional and district Civic Forum leaders from the Czech Republic. The seminar agenda, designed principally by Civic Forum, was aimed at helping local leaders deal with popular cynicism and indifference towards participation in elections and political activism. NDI selected as participants for the workshop sessions a team of skilled political professionals principally from northwest European countries. The team was comprised of Connie Hedegaard, MP, Denmark; Hugo Dittmar, campaign manager, VVD, the Netherlands; Hege Hero, member of the city council of Oslo, Norway; and Les Francis, from the United States, who previously was Executive Director of the DCCC. The team was led by Michael McAdams, an NDI advisor and Democratic political strategist with experience in grassroots organizing and civic education in the U.S. and abroad.

Following the three-day workshop, the NDI delegation divided into three teams and spent the next three days in six regional centers conducting one-day workshops on political participation.

From September 8 - 14, in order to develop an appropriate follow-on program in political party development, Program Director Thomas O. Melia and Program Assistant Lisa McLean travelled to Prague and Bratislava. NDI had received requests from leading Members of the Federal parliament for assistance in establishing a parliamentary institute to educate new members and staff and to support the work of the parliament. The visit was timed to coincide with a visit by a technical team from the House Special Task Force on the Development of Parliamentary Institutions in Eastern Europe, chaired by Congressman Martin Frost (D-Texas). The purpose of this simultaneous visit was to enhance cooperation and compatibility between NDI's work and that of the Frost Task Force.

As a result of the visit, NDI determined that plans for the development of a Parliamentary Institute to support the Czech and Slovak Federal Assembly were proceeding and that current needs could be satisfied by the Frost Task Force. In light of the turmoil then apparent in the umbrella movements Civic Forum and Public Against Violence, it was decided that the time was not propitious for party development work. NDI will continue communications with Congressman Frost on what role NDI can play to complement the Frost Task Force's efforts.

During the summer NDI purchased a word processor for use by President Havel's office in order to aid in the efficiency of office operations.

NDI spent \$31,986.75 of the \$53,792 budget earmarked for political training. The remainder was reprogrammed in September 1990.

Evaluation/Accomplishments

NDI advisors and international experts helped train Civic Forum leaders in preparation for the June 1990 elections, while consultations with AISA aided all parties to gauge public attitudes towards the upcoming elections. Although post-election work in Czechoslovakia was put on hold temporarily, the September trip helped lay the foundation for future work in developing the Eastern European political institutions.

Czechoslovakia: Political Development & Election Processes (Final Report)

Summary

With funding from AID-NED, NDI conducted a four-part project in Czechoslovakia in the run-up to the elections on June 8 and 9, 1990. The program components were as follows: 1) to provide consultations on the establishment of a parallel vote counting system to ensure the integrity of the election process and public confidence in it, 2) continued political training assistance to Czechoslovakia's parties, 3) funding a national public opinion survey on attitudes toward the democratic changes taking place in the country, and 4) an international observer delegation to monitor the June elections.

Background

Following popular protests in November 1989, the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia ceded partial power to democratic activists and agreed to enter a coalition transition government that would liberalize society and restore pluralism. A key part of the coalition agreement was the installation of Vaclav Havel as president.

NDI sent a survey team to Prague, headed by Dr. Madeleine Albright, on January 8-17, 1990. During a visit with President Havel, he requested that NDI send a group of election experts immediately to advise the President's designated experts in drafting a new electoral law. NDI sent four elections experts in mid-January to consult with the Czechoslovak government and to develop follow-on programs. They were Peter Hack, a Hungarian lawyer and participant in his country's 1985 roundtable negotiations on election structure; Richard Holme, the founding director of the U.K.'s Electoral Reform Society; Antonio Vittorino, a Judge from Portugal's Constitutional Court; and Larry Garber, NDI's Senior Consultant. President Havel also requested immediate assistance in political training for Czechoslovakia's emerging democratic parties. The Civic Forum and other groups reiterated this request and asked that NDI begin the training as soon as possible.

In February, NDI organized a seminar in Washington for representatives of the Civic Forum, Public Against Violence, the Social Democratic Party, and student organizations. The presentations focused on campaign planning, grassroots organizing, and political communications. In a follow-up session, NDI organized a one-day consultation for the election

director of the Civic Forum with the Chairwoman of the Federal Election Commission, state and local election administrators, and a U.S. specialist in comparative election systems. In addition, using non-federal funds, NDI assisted with the preparation and management of President Havel's state visit to the United States in February.

In January, the new Czechoslovak government announced elections for June 8 and 9 for the two chambers of the Federal Assembly, the Czech National Council and the Slovak National Council. The election law provided for a proportional representation system with regional multi-candidate lists submitted by each qualifying party. Voters were given a chance to express personal preferences in voting for each office. Candidate slates were finalized on April 8, with the official campaign beginning on April 28.

Program Objectives

The program's objectives were to establish a parallel vote counting system to protect the integrity of the elections, to conduct training seminars to assist Czechoslovakia's parties, to support a public opinion survey, and to conclude the analysis of the electoral system with a 25-member observer mission to the elections, co-sponsored with NRIIA.

As the election approached, the parallel vote counting system was deemed unnecessary and NDI and NRIIA decided to expand the size of the observer delegation to 60 people and to conclude the mission with a conference to provide a public forum on the role of democracy.

Relation to Endowment Purposes

The program's aim was to strengthen democratic parties in Czechoslovakia, to encourage voter interest and participation in the June elections, to help ensure a fair and open election process, and to establish a working relationship between U.S. political parties and democratic organizations in Czechoslovakia.

Project Activities

1) Parallel Vote Counting System. In early May, President Havel requested NDI's assistance in designing a parallel vote counting system for the Civic Forum that would instill popular confidence in the integrity of the June elections. Later in the month, Glenn Cowan, NDI advisor and international expert on independent vote counting systems, met with CF/PAV representatives in Prague to provide the appropriate technical

assistance. Subsequently, it was decided by the Czechs and Slovaks that, considering the improving political circumstances, the establishment of such a system was unnecessary.

2) Continued Political Training. In early 1990, NDI agreed to coordinate with NRIIA a program of political training to emerging democratic Czech and Slovak political organizations. It was agreed that NDI would focus its work on the Civic Forum and Public Against Violence, while NRIIA would do its training principally with parties outside the CF/PAV umbrella.

During the week of May 7, NRIIA sponsored its seminar for political parties in the Czech and Slovak Republics. NDI sent two US political experts as participants: Frank Greer, a prominent Democratic Party advisor on political communications, and Verne Newton, an expert on policy formulation. Greer's presentation, made at a seminar in Prague for 40 people from 10 political parties, addressed how to simplify complex political messages for presentation to voters. Newton participated in individual consultations over a three-day period with twelve political parties at their respective headquarters in Prague and Bratislava.

In response to a Civic Forum request, Mr. Greer also met with the new managers of state-controlled television to review its plans for providing news coverage and public service time for the election.

At the invitation of Public Against Violence, a team of international advisers traveled to Czechoslovakia from May 14 to 17 to present an election training program for PAV local leaders and candidates in Bratislava and eight other districts in Slovakia. The team was comprised of Connie Hedegaard, MP, Denmark; Hege Hero, member of the city council of Oslo, Norway; and Les Francis, from the United States, who previously was Executive Director of the DCCC. The team was led by Michael McAdams, an NDI advisor and Democratic political strategist with experience in grassroots organizing and civic education in the U.S. and abroad.

(3) Association for Independent Social Analysis. NDI established a cooperative agreement with the Association for Independent Social Analysis, which involved a grant of \$15,250 to conduct a public opinion survey. This survey, entitled "Czechoslovakia - May 1990", was the group's second since the revolution; the first having been conducted in January. At the request of the Association, NDI also sponsored a second visit (the first having been carried out under a previous NED grant) by professional opinion researcher Peter Hart, who advised the Association on the analysis of the survey results.

A representative sample of 2900 respondents, determined according to age, gender, level of education, region, and size of settlement, was prepared by The Center of Empirical Research at the Institute of Sociology. Field work for the survey took place between April 28 and May 11, 1990, and consisted of face-to-face standardized interviews with respondents age eighteen and older.

The survey assessed the attitudes of the citizenry in four main areas: 1) political parties; 2) participation in the election process; 3) a democratically-elected government; and 4) economic and social reforms. Results of the survey were used to assist political organizations in their efforts to encourage voter participation, and build parties that were responsive to the needs and desires of the electorate.

In order that the information would be available to the interested public and to all competing political actors, the survey results were presented to the press in May, and a series of articles based on the results of the survey were published in the independent newspaper Lidove Noviny in May and June. A survey report was published by the Association in July, and was distributed among Czechoslovak institutions and organizations, such as the Federal Assembly, the Czech and Slovak National councils, research institutions and the media. Three hundred copies of the survey report have been produced in Czech and 200 in English.

(4) Election Observing. Ten days prior to the elections, NDI sent a pre-election survey team to Prague to assess the campaign environment, to identify problems evident during the official campaign period or those that might be anticipated in the voting/counting process, and to provide a written report to election observers. The team was comprised of three US election experts: NDI's Senior Consultant for Election Processes, Larry Garber; NDI's Legal Counsel, Robert Bauer of the law firm Perkins Coie; and Anita Dunn, Counsel to the Senate Democratic Campaign Committee. The delegation uncovered few complaints about the system and little concern about fraud, ballot security, or intimidation. In terms of the voting and counting procedures, concerns dealt not with malfeasance, but with a desire to conduct an orderly and efficient process. The report of the expert team was incorporated into the briefing material provided to the international delegation to the June 8-9 elections.

NDI's role in the election period culminated in an international election observation delegation from June 7 until June 11, co-sponsored by the National Republican Institute. Under a previous NED grant, preparatory work for the observer mission was done by an NDI team consisting of Robert Bauer, NDI's legal counsel; Anita Dunn, counsel to the DSCC; and Larry Garber, NDI consultant on election law. Fifty-six observers from twelve countries came to Czechoslovakia to demonstrate international

support for the democratic electoral process and for the restoration of democracy in Czechoslovakia. The leaders of the delegation were U.S. Senators Christopher Dodd (D-Connecticut) and John McCain (R-Arizona); former Irish Prime Minister Garrett FitzGerald, T.D.; and the first lady of Honduras, Norma Gaborit de Callejas. The mission was also intended as a means of exposing delegates from the emerging democracies of Hungary and Chile to different approaches to democratization.

During its five days in Czechoslovakia, the delegation met with President Havel, government ministers, election officials and leaders of competing political parties. On the two voting days (June 8 and 9), the delegation divided into eleven teams to watch the balloting and counting process at over 200 polling station in nine regions of the country.

Following the two-day election period, NDI organized the Prague Symposium on Democracy, a roundtable discussion to stimulate public awareness about key issues confronting democratic societies. Distinguished democrats from around the world joined leading intellectuals and politicians from Czechoslovakia to discuss the difficulties and pressures inherent in the struggle to convert from totalitarian communism to a democracy. The moderator was journalist Pierre Salinger. The symposium was filmed for use as a documentary on Czechoslovakia television, as well as for wider distribution.

Expenditures were \$183,854, approximately \$11,000 more than budgeted. The overrun was due principally to the increase in the size of the delegation brought to Czechoslovakia for the election.

Evaluation/Accomplishments

The NDI program contributed to the strengthening of new political organizations within Czechoslovakia through training seminars, which gave insight into get-out-the-vote techniques and development of themes that would encourage the electorate to vote. This effort was reenforced by the results of the opinion survey that were made available to all parties. Its findings helped provide an understanding of the development of public opinion in this dynamic environment.

Consultations on establishment of a parallel vote counting system were successful, although Civic Forum later determined that the political situation did not justify using the system.

The pre-election report on the election system and campaign atmosphere was essential to preparation for the election observer mission and made possible future consultations on electoral reform.

The observer mission provided an opportunity for people from emerging democracies to gain further insight into the democratic process. While no fraud or intimidation was anticipated for the June election, the observer mission played a key role in legitimizing the election results to the Czech and Slovak peoples, as well as to the international community. The symposium following the elections encouraged broad participation in the political system by sparking public interest in issues effecting democracy.