

WOMEN IN POLITICS

Madeleine K. Albright Grant Recognizes Bosnian Women's Group

Women in the ethnically divided city of Mostar, Bosnia-Herzegovina have literally walked across a bridge to build an advocacy network that is among the few examples of multiethnic political cooperation in a country fractured by seemingly insurmountable ethnic divides.

The newly formed Mostar Women's Citizen Initiative draws together women—political activists, civic leaders, ordinary citizens—to address common issues without regard for the ethnic affiliation of its members or those it assists.

Their work is about using the tools of democracy—community organizing, public outreach, petitioning government—and the values of democracy—tolerance, pluralism and compromise—to bridge the city's sharp divisions, and solve pressing community wide problems.

The Mostar Women's Citizen Initiative is proof that citizens give life and meaning to principles and institutions. The 2006 Madeleine K. Albright Grant recognizes this unprecedented effort in an ancient city

whose historic Stari Most bridge once symbolized centuries of multi-ethnic harmony, but could not withstand the ravages of modern-day prejudice and bombardment. The \$25,000 grant will allow the Initiative to strengthen its organizational capacity and expand efforts to promote public participation in the policymaking process.

Today, more than a decade after the Dayton Peace Accords quelled the violence, Mostar remains physically divided, with Croats and Bosniaks living on either side of the restored bridge that was reopened in 2004. Recently, research revealed that the harsh reality of life in a divided city was, itself, the problem most often cited by women in Mostar.



▲ Snjezana Dropulic (center, left) and Amira Spago (right), two of the founders of the Mostar women's group.

These women witnessed first-hand how problems go unsolved when ethnic affiliation dominates social relationships, education, employment and governance, and they decided to make the political process work for them. NDI helped the Initiative develop the tools to solve complex problems, to work collectively and to become leaders in their own right.

Last year, the first Madeleine K. Albright Grant was given to the Women's Political Caucus of Indonesia (*Kaukus Perempuan Politik Indonesia or KPPI*).

Snjezana Dropulic and Amira Spago accepted the award from Madeleine K. Albright at a May 1 luncheon in Washington, DC, which featured CNN Chief International Correspondent Christiane Amanpour as the keynote speaker. The event also included the premiere of a film about the Mostar Women's Citizen Initiative called *Building Bridges*. Highlights of the luncheon will be featured in the next edition of NDI Reports.

LIBERIA

Women's Forum Coincides with Inauguration of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf

Two days before the swearing-in of Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf – Africa's first democratically elected female head of state – more than 250 women met in Monrovia to discuss the role of women in African politics.

“Women are gathering from all over the world to celebrate and share collectively in this victory. This is not only a victory for the women of Liberia but a victory

for women all over Africa,” said President Johnson Sirleaf shortly before her inauguration. “I intend to ensure that my government will fulfill its promise to the Liberian people and make a good first impression that all women can be proud of.”

At the conference, titled *Women Uniting for Change: In Unity, There is Strength*, the key-



▲ Newly elected Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf addresses the women's forum in Monrovia on January 14.

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note address was delivered by Gertrude Mongella, President of the Pan-African Parliament. Representatives from governments, NGOs, political parties and religious groups discussed women's political participation and leadership, their roles in peace and security and the sexual and reproductive health and rights of women in Africa.

“For the first time, this conference provided an opportunity for women from all over the world to convene in Liberia,” said Vabah Gayflor, Liberia’s Minister of Gender and Development, which co-sponsored the event with NDI. “It is truly an honor for us and we hope that the interaction between the Liberian women and their counterparts from all over the world was an enriching experience.”

Other speakers included: Binta Diop, Executive Director of Femmes Africa Solidarité (FAS); Bisi Adeleye-Fayemi, Executive Director and a co-founder of the African Women’s Development Fund; Sindi Medar-Gould, Executive Director, BOABAB; and Vivian Derryck, Senior Vice-President at the Academy for Educational Development (AED) and former Vice-President of Programs at NDI.

“The conference helped create ideas for new initiatives for women in Africa to emerge,” says Kristin Haffert, NDI’s Manager of Women’s Programs. “The election of President Johnson Sirleaf adds new voice to the principles of the *Win With Women Global Initiative* we’ve been involved with for the past few years.”

Win With Women offers recommendations for advancing women’s political participation in individual countries. It was developed in 2003 by women leaders from around the world, and has since been applied in over 25 countries.



▲ A participant discusses the role of women in African politics during one of the forum’s workshops.

FLASHBACK: DECEMBER 1986

NDI Hosts Ellen Johnson Sirleaf on Capitol Hill

Twenty years ago, former Finance Minister and political activist Ellen Johnson Sirleaf took part in an NDI-sponsored discussion on Capitol Hill about prospects for democracy in Liberia. Below is an excerpt from NDI’s December 1986 Newsletter:

Liberian political and civic leaders met with NDI and Members of Congress to explore current impediments to full democracy in that West African nation. The one-day seminar on Capitol Hill focused on current political and economic developments in preparation for a future program in Monrovia.

Former finance minister and political activist Ellen Johnson Sirleaf [left in pix] was a special participant. After imprisonment and subsequent threats from the government, she escaped Liberia only days before the seminar.

Discussions focused on human rights issues and the deterioration of Liberia’s economic infrastructure.

A number of participants argued that only new elections could lead to real economic change in Liberia. Others, however, proposed possible interim measures.

Senator John Kerry (D-MA) briefed the group on Senate Foreign Relations Committee activities and prospects for legislation to encourage democratic reform in Liberia.



▲ Ellen Johnson Sirleaf (left) discusses her country’s future with Senator John Kerry (D-MA) and NDI staff on Capitol Hill in 1986.

Putting Politics on the Map

When Palestinians went to the polls in January, nearly every one of the 1,008 polling stations in the West Bank and Gaza had been mapped using Global Positioning System satellite technology.

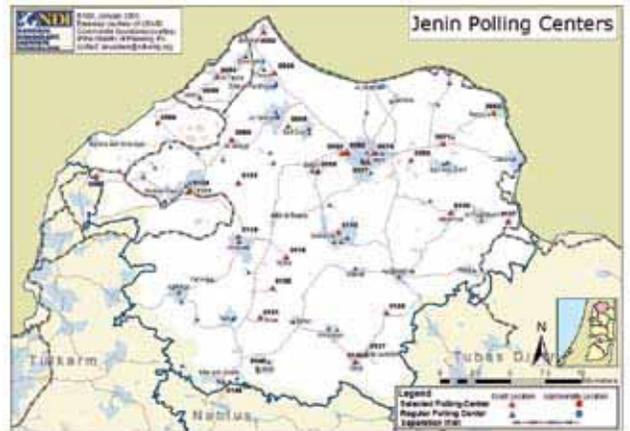
Thanks to a pilot Geographic Information Systems (GIS) project conducted over the past year, NDI created a “smart map” of the West Bank and Gaza that allows users to search, edit and analyze observation information and election results at polling stations throughout the Palestinian territories. NDI used this information to document voting irregularities such as abuse of illiteracy provisions and improper police conduct. The information collected was also used by the Palestinian Central Election Commission to publish maps of polling centers.

NDI is also using this technology in Serbia and Bangladesh, where digital mapping is helping observer organizations identify

constituencies with unusually high turnout rates for particular candidates.

In addition to its usefulness for elections, GIS mapping holds great potential for political organizers. In Serbia, for example, NDI’s digital maps allow political parties to plot their levels of support in precise geographical regions, helping determine where resources should be allocated. In Bangladesh, political parties will use GIS maps to more effectively plan their political outreach ahead of the 2007 parliamentary elections.

“This technology is particularly exciting as a tool for parties to connect with citizens,” says Ian Schuler, who led the technical



▲ This map of polling stations in the Jenin District of the West Bank was created using satellite technology.

implementation of the NDI project in the West Bank and Gaza. “By showing party leaders where they’re strong and where they need to work harder, GIS technology encourages political parties to reach out to people.”

Democracy in the Digital Age

Technologies such as cell phones, text messaging, the Internet and blogs are changing the relationship between governments and citizens. In closed societies, these tools allow citizens to circumvent the state’s tight control over media and information. In emerging democracies, the ability of technology to spread information can strengthen citizen participation and improve government accountability.

To explore in greater detail how technology is impacting the promotion and strengthening of democratic institutions around the world, NDI co-sponsored a conference with the International Republican Institute (IRI) and Democracy Data & Communications (DDC), a technology firm specializing in public affairs.

The one-day event brought together experts in democratic development with technologists, government leaders and representatives from the private sector. Topics discussed included: the use of technology at a grassroots level to empower citizens; new technologies to promote free and fair elections; and ways technology can help



▲ In Namibia, NDI teamed up with Compaq, Microsoft and USAID to equip a large bus with computers so citizens around the country could connect with their elected representatives.

underrepresented groups participate in the political process.

“Throughout history, technology and innovation have been catalysts for revolutionary changes in society and government, empowering the individual to question authority and challenge the status quo,” said Rep. Anna Eshoo (D-CA), in a keynote address. “And through technology in the 21st Century, we are making more information available to more human beings throughout the world than previous generations would have ever thought possible.” Eshoo represents California’s 14th Congressional District, home of Silicon Valley.

To learn more about NDI’s technology programs, visit www.ndi.org.

WEST BANK AND GAZA: PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

NDI and the Carter Center organized an 85-member observer delegation to the January 25 Palestinian legislative elections. The delegation was led by (left to right) former Swedish Prime Minister Carl Bildt, former Spanish Foreign Minister Ana Palacio, former U.S. President Jimmy Carter, NDI President Kenneth Wollack and former Albanian President Rexhep Meidani. It included elected officials, electoral and human rights experts, regional specialists, and political and civic leaders from 22 countries in Asia, Europe, the Middle East, Europe, Africa and North America.

Excerpts from the NDI-Carter Center post-election report:

“Under the difficult circumstances of the ongoing conflict and occupation, Palestinian voters turned out in large numbers in a strong expression of their desire to choose representatives through open and competitive elections. The obvious pride and enthusiasm of Palestinians about the election process was evident throughout the voting districts. This was reinforced by the professional and impartial performance of election officials. Through the high turnout in these elections and in the 2005 presidential election, as well as the notable participation in five rounds of municipal elections over the last year, Palestinians have clearly demonstrated a commitment to democratic elections...

The 2006 PLC elections present a unique challenge with the participation of the Islamic Resistance Movement, or Hamas, which has advocated violence, including the killing of civilians, as a means to achieving a political end. It is also committed to the destruction of a United Nations member state. While it is in the long term interest of Palestinian democratic development, and likely in the long term security interests of Israel, that a wide spectrum of groups participate in lawful and peaceful political processes. Hamas' current political participation, while simultaneously advocating violence, is not consistent with a fundamental principle of democratic elections...

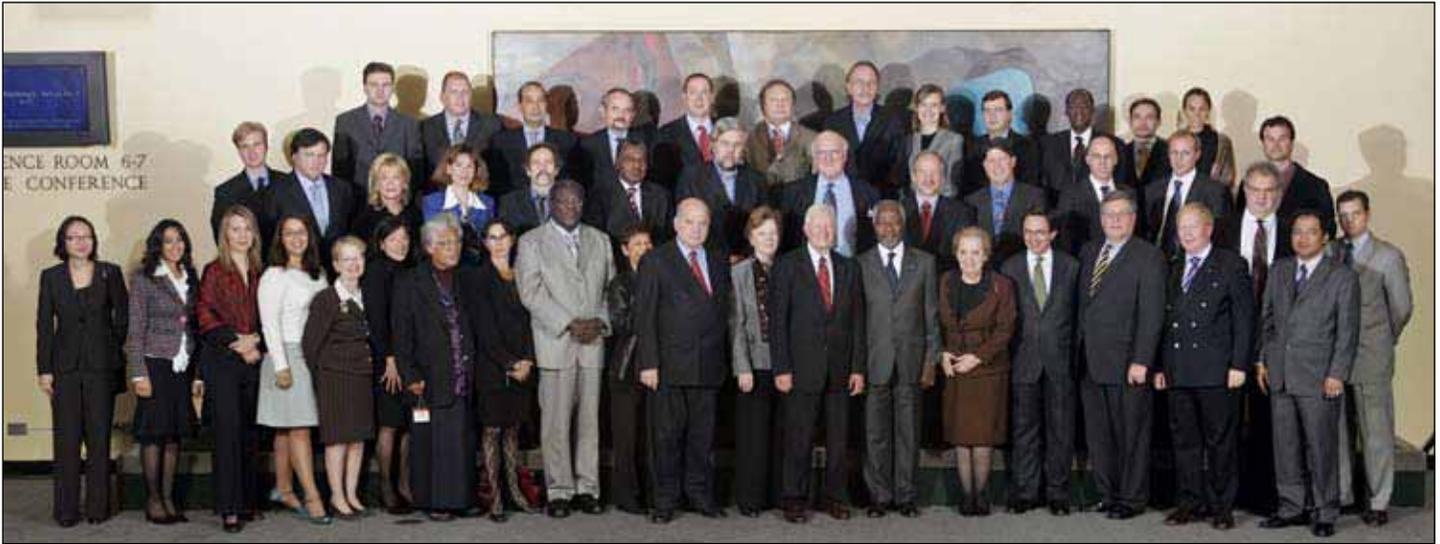
We hope that the elections will mark a decisive move toward the renunciation of violence by all groups and toward addressing corruption and other issues that are central to improving the lives of Palestinians...”

To read the full report, visit the NDI website at www.ndi.org.



The NDI-Carter Center delegation formed part of NDI's two-year comprehensive observation of Palestinian election processes. Supported by USAID, the program began with the 2004 voter registration process and included all five rounds of the 2004-2005 municipal elections, the joint NDI/Carter Center observation of the 2005 parliamentary election, and the placement of long-term observers in Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza in the lead-up to the parliamentary polls.

Election Monitoring Principles Adopted



▲ Representatives from more than 20 organizations at UN Headquarters for the signing ceremony of election monitoring principles.

For the first time, a common set of principles for professional, impartial and effective election observation has been adopted by more than 20 organizations involved in monitoring elections around the world.

The *Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation* and the *Code of Conduct for International Election Observers* are aimed at better ensuring the integrity of international election observation.

“Our hope is that the Declaration will enable consistency among observer groups and ensure the effectiveness and credibility of observation missions worldwide,” said former U.S. President Jimmy Carter at the signing ceremony in October.

The multi-year process to adopt the common principles was led by NDI, The Carter Center and the United Nations Electoral Assistance Division (UNEAD).

“This Declaration is a major landmark in developing an international consensus on the standards for election observation,” said NDI Chairman and former U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright. “It brings together an unprecedented group

of international organizations in support of the principles of international election observation.”

Endorsing organizations commit themselves, for example, to act impartially, monitor all stages of the election process, and accept no funding from the host government. The common principles also establish prerequisites for observation such as freedom of movement, freedom to make public statements and free access to information. The Declaration also calls for organizations to ensure that sending monitors not be done in a way that lends undue legitimacy to undemocratic elections.

Read the full *Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation and Code of Conduct for International Election Observers* by visiting www.ndi.org.



▲ (right to left) NDI Chairman Madeleine Albright, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan and former US President Jimmy Carter endorse the initiative.

Endorsing Organizations of the Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation and Code of Conduct for International Election Observers

- African Union
- Asian Network for Free Elections
- Association of Central and Eastern European Election Officials
- The Carter Center
- Center for Electoral Promotion and Assistance
- Commonwealth Secretariat
- Council of European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission)
- Council of Europe—Parliamentary Assembly
- Electoral Institute of Southern African
- European Commission
- European Network of Election Monitoring Organizations
- Electoral Reform International Services
- La Francophonie
- IFES
- International IDEA
- Inter-Parliamentary Union
- International Republican Institute
- National Democratic Institute
- Organization of American States
- Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
- Pacific Islands, Australia & New Zealand Electoral Administrators’ Association
- Pacific Island Forum
- Southern African Development Community
- Parliamentary Forum
- United Nations Secretariat
- United States Association of Former Members of Congress

Understanding the Role of Political Parties

Political parties around the world are striving to find the most effective ways to mobilize voters, select candidates, acquire funding and regulate party operations.

To help respond to these challenges, NDI invited four leading scholars to prepare papers that explore the obstacles to, and possible approaches for, creating more effective and inclusive political parties.

The result is a four-part research series called *Political Parties in Democracy in Theoretical and Practical Perspectives*. The first two papers – on party law and finance – discuss regulatory mechanisms that directly impact parties. The other two – on intra-party democracy and communications – relate to parties’ internal governance and organization.

This unique research series blends theoretical knowledge and empirical research with practical experience. NDI engaged a range of experts – including

Political Parties in Democracy in Theoretical and Practical Perspective

POLITICAL FINANCE POLICY, PARTIES AND DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT

by Dr. Michael Johnston, Colgate University

ADOPTING PARTY LAW

by Dr. Kenneth Janda, Northwestern University

IMPLEMENTING INTRA-PARTY DEMOCRACY

by Dr. Susan Scarrow, University of Houston

DEVELOPMENTS IN PARTY COMMUNICATIONS

by Dr. Pippa Norris, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University

To learn more about these scholars and this research series, go to www.ndi.org

party leaders, democracy practitioners and other academics – in every stage of the process, from developing the initial terms of reference to reviewing drafts

and commenting on the final papers.

The research was supported by USAID’s Office of Democracy and Governance.

CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Roma Find Their Political Voice In Europe’s New Democracies

Central and Eastern Europe’s fast-growing Roma communities are economically impoverished, socially isolated, and politically marginalized. The European Union is pressing member states and candidate countries to address the plight of the Roma community, whose 10 million members comprise Europe’s largest ethnic minority.

By participating as voters, advocates, watchdogs, and elected officials, Roma themselves can address their communities’ critical needs in housing, education, employment and healthcare.

Since 2004, NDI has trained Roma activists in political organizing and election preparation, and has connected emerging Roma leaders with mainstream political parties and governing institutions. The results are encouraging. A Roma candidate in recent Slovak regional elections fell just short of winning elected office but used NDI outreach suggestions to garner the most votes ever by a Slovak Roma. In Bulgaria, NDI-trained Roma met with President Georgi Parvanov to offer their views on education reform in Roma communities. In Kosovo and Macedonia, Roma elected officials have

taken NDI advice to forge issue coalitions with mainstream and other minority parties in parliament. With their



Courtesy: Milan Simecka Foundation

▲ Roma communities suffer disproportionately from inadequate housing, unemployment and poor education. NDI is helping Roma address these problems through the political process.

Continued on next page

DEMOCRACY UPDATE

■ ABUJA, Nigeria

In May, an NDI-sponsored delegation, including four former heads of state and government from Africa and North America, recommend political reforms in advance of the 2007 national elections. The delegation raises serious concerns about a proposed constitutional amendment to extend term limits for the president and governors.

■ MEXICO CITY, Mexico

In April, an NDI pre-election assessment urges significant electoral reforms before the July 2 presidential election.

■ MINSK, Belarus

In March, NDI Chairman Madeleine K. Albright condemns Belarusian government for brutal dispersal and arrests of peaceful demonstrators in the aftermath of the presidential election.

■ PRISTINA, Kosovo

In December, the Kosovo Democratic Institute (KDI), a domestic NGO that emerged from NDI's civil society program, opens its doors.

■ TIRANA, Albania

In December, 41 NGOs take part in an NDI-sponsored public exhibition to coincide with the International Day Against Corruption.



For detailed information on democratic developments in these countries, visit www.ndi.org.

■ BAGHDAD, Iraq

In December, more than 15,000 NDI-trained observers monitor the parliamentary elections.

■ ZANZIBAR, Tanzania

In October, an NDI delegation notes problems with the voter registry, the

heavy presence of security forces and the use of force on election day during legislative polls.

■ ANDEAN REGION, South America

In October, more than a dozen lawmakers from Bolivia, Peru, Colombia, Ecuador and Venezuela visit Washington to explore the issue of poverty in their region.

CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE (Continued from page 6)

numbers growing in local assemblies, Roma are turning their attention to winning elected office at the national level.

One Slovak parliamentary candidate has placed Roma activists trained by NDI on his campaign team and is reaching out to Roma constituents. A group of Bulgarian members of parliament is seeking to strengthen the penal code against the practice of vote buying which disproportionately affects poor Roma communities.

The Institute is also promoting regional exchange among its Roma partners through a series of political leadership academies. The 2005 academy, held in Ohrid, Macedonia, brought 15 Roma activists together to learn about Roma



▲ Roma participants in a mock radio interview during an election campaign simulation at the 2005 Roma leadership academy.

political developments in neighboring countries. The Bulgarian Roma delegation returned to Sofia pressing for Roma appointments to government posts and secured two appointments for prominent Roma at the deputy ministerial level.

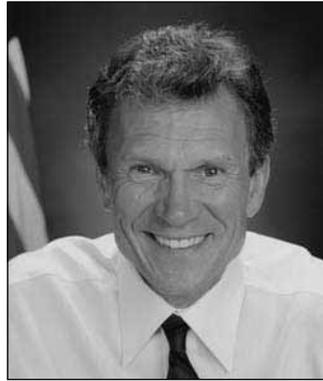
In April, NDI launched its Roma initiative in Romania with the 2006 Roma political leadership academy in Bucharest. The event brought together 24 Roma activists from eight countries to examine how to assess the impact of draft legislation on Roma communities and how to monitor the implementation of national Roma development policies.

For more on NDI's Roma Program, visit www.ndi.org.

NEW BOARD MEMBERS



Mark R. Warner returns to the NDI Board after serving as Virginia Governor from 2002 until the end of his term limit in January. As Governor, he chaired the National Governor's Association and was named among Time Magazine's "America's 5 Best Governors" in 2005.



Thomas A. Daschle served as the Senate Majority and Minority Leader during his three terms in the U.S. Senate. He also represented South Dakota for four terms in the U.S House of Representatives. Currently, Daschle is a visiting professor at Georgetown University and Senior Fellow at the Center for American Progress.

NDI ACTION

Visit NDI's latest website – ndiaction.org – to learn more about current NDI events and programs, sign up for democracy updates and contribute to our work.

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2030 M. Street, N.W. Fifth Floor
Washington, DC 20036-3306
Tel: 202.728.5500 Fax: 202.728.5520
contact@ndi.org
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