

## NDI DEMOCRACY AWARD



Senator George Mitchell (center) and Northern Ireland recipients of Harriman Democracy Award (l to r): Gary McMichael, Monica McWilliams, Gerry Adams, John Hume, Mitchell, David Trimble, Lord Alderdice, David Ervine and Malachi Curran.

## NDI Honors President Clinton and Northern Ireland Political Party Leaders

“They were successful in reaching the agreement because they demonstrated that democracy can work even in a sharply divided society wracked by conflict,” remarked former Senator George Mitchell upon presenting NDI’s W. Averell Harriman Democracy Award to the eight political party leaders who negotiated the “Good Friday” peace agreement in Northern Ireland. “They showed that democratic dialogue, principled compromise and meaningful negotiation can produce a just result.” Mitchell was a recipient of the Harriman Award in 1993.

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*“The National Democratic Institute has been working on the Northern Ireland political process for 14 years, and it is testament to the organization’s efforts for democracy there that the Irish came to Washington.”*

—Washington Post

## ASIA

### Indonesians Prepare for New Era

Student demonstrations in Indonesia last spring ignited a nationwide movement for political reform that toppled President Soeharto’s 32-year reign in the far-flung East Asian archipelago. Most blamed Soeharto’s autocratic rule and “crony capitalism” for the country’s mounting financial problems that threatened to undermine social order. Amid a new environment of change and expectation, there is widespread agreement on the need for a legitimately elected government to address severe economic problems. Current efforts at democratization present an historic opportunity for political transformation as Indonesians begin to focus on rebuilding and reforming their nation’s political and economic systems.

Despite recent advances in the world’s fourth most populous country, however, democratic reform faces many challenges. Much of the previous system remains intact, including a powerful military and a parliament dominated by Soeharto’s former allies that will define the terms of an evolving political framework. With elections scheduled for June 1999, there is apprehension that the new system will continue to unfairly benefit the current regime. Concerns have been raised as well about the current government’s response to increased calls for regional autonomy and secessionist movements, which have raised fears of national disintegration and threaten to destabilize the transition process.

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## Supporting Nigeria's Democratic Transition

Nigeria's political climate changed dramatically following the sudden death of military dictator Sani Abacha last June. Abacha's successor, Gen. Abjulsalami Abubakar, stated his intention to oversee a return to civilian rule and launched a series of political reforms intended to restore an elected democratic government by May. Nigeria, Africa's most populous country, has been ruled by the military for all but 10 years since gaining independence in 1960, and the promised transition to civilian rule has raised the hopes of Nigerians and democracy advocates throughout the continent.

Decades of official corruption and oppression, however, have left their toll with an infrastructure in collapse and a country beset with economic and political crises. A new constitution to replace a series of military decrees will have to address many fundamental issues—including federalism, reallocation of resources, regional and ethnic tensions, civilian oversight of military affairs and the establishment of government accountability. But Nigerians across the political spectrum believe that before these concerns can be confronted, military rule must be replaced with a legitimately elected civilian government.

*"With brutal war flaring nearby in Sierra Leone and elsewhere on the continent, . . . no one should underestimate the countervailing example Nigeria could provide if it succeeds in its transition from military rule."*

—Washington Post



**Election officials (left) provide ballots to voter in Kaduna, Northern Nigeria during state elections on January 9.**

While recognizing the long-term challenges to Nigeria's democratic transformation, NDI is assisting efforts to enhance the integrity of a series of local, state and national elections in December, January and February that are viewed as a precursor to a successful transition process. In one program, NDI works to strengthen the capacity of a coalition of 56 civic organizations to conduct domestic election monitoring activities. On another front, NDI and the Atlanta-based Carter Center are jointly organizing a series of delegations to examine the political environment before and during the polls, and provide advice to Nigerians on how to enhance prospects for credible elections.

Reports issued by the delegations and extensive consultations undertaken between delegation members and Nigerian political leaders are creating heightened dialogue about both a legitimate election process and the sustained commitment necessary for a successful transition to civilian rule.

In December, NDI began working with the Transition Monitoring Group (TMG)—a coalition of women's associations, religious groups and human rights

organizations that emerged shortly after the transition—to support a fair and transparent election process by conducting a broad-based election monitoring effort. Many of the TMG member organizations that formed the new coalition had been in the forefront of Nigeria's democracy movement for more than a decade. NDI has been providing training and technical assistance to TMG on organizational planning, monitoring procedures, deployment plans, data base development, reporting strategies and volunteer recruitment.

Statements released by the TMG on local and state balloting attracted widespread press coverage and have helped establish the Group as the country's foremost pollwatching organization. For the February 20 legislative and February 27 presidential polls, TMG plans to deploy more than 10,000 monitors. NDI has also assisted other civic, labor, student and women's groups with their monitoring programs. As in other democratizing countries, domestic monitoring in Nigeria is viewed by many as likely to enhance greater political discourse, citizen involvement and heightened public confidence for the elections and the transition beyond.

Coinciding with the conduct of the December local and January state elections, NDI and The Carter Center jointly sent delegations to Nigeria to assess the evolving political environment, examine preparations for the polls and demonstrate international support for the country's democratization efforts. Political leaders and regional experts from Ghana, Kenya, Niger, Sweden and the U.S. shared ideas and experiences with hundreds of their Nigerian counterparts on how to enhance credibility and participation in the electoral process.

Broader transition issues were addressed as well including constitutional reform, decentralization and a nonpolitical role for the military in Nigerian society. The delegations also observed balloting at polling sites and issued reports on the strengths and weaknesses of the elections themselves. The delegation observing the state elections noted improvements from the earlier local

polls, which “represented another step forward in Nigeria’s transition to civilian rule.”

In January, former President Jimmy Carter visited Lagos where he praised Nigeria’s “courageous steps to form a democratic society.” Carter will co-lead a joint NDI-Carter Center international delegation to the presidential election on February 27, which marks the final phase of the election timetable. Delegation co-leaders include former Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Colin Powell and Niger’s first democratically elected president, Mahamane Ousmane, who was deposed in a 1996 coup.

*NDI is also conducting Central, East and West Africa programs in the Central African Republic, Ghana, Guinea-Conakry, Liberia, Mali and Niger. A regional program strengthens women’s political participation.*

## Southern African Leaders Unite to Fight Corruption

Many countries in southern Africa have entered a new era of multiparty democracy following decades of colonial and authoritarian rule. Previous regimes, however, have left a legacy of mistrust in government, and a vast divide between the lives of ordinary citizens and the policymaking process. The public looks to new, popularly elected authorities for evidence that democracy will curtail the widespread corruption and economic mismanagement of the past.

Some countries in the region have adopted unprecedented legal and constitutional standards for government accountability and transparency. They recognize that corruption not only undermines the legitimacy of fragile democratic institutions, but also impedes the ability of government to achieve economic growth and discourage waste of limited public resources.

*“Corruption is a cancer that burrows deep into the marrow of good governance and impacts negatively on economic and social development, thus eroding the very foundations of society and state.”*

—Walter Kamba, Law Professor,  
University of Namibia

NDI has supported efforts by southern African governments to combat corruption and promote ethical standards among political officials and other government employees. In South Africa, parliamentarians passed a landmark code of conduct in 1996 that helped fulfill constitutional requirements to develop ethical standards for public officials. Also, legislation to create a code for cabinet officials was developed by President Nelson Mandela’s office and recently introduced in parliament. South Africa’s Heath Commission continues to conduct independent investigations of alleged corrupt activities. In Namibia, high-level efforts to promote ethics in the public sector led to the organization of a national forum to design a comprehensive anti-corruption strategy.

In October, NDI brought together senior political leaders from seven southern African nations to examine anti-corruption initiatives of governments that are members of the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), a regional economic development consortium. The timing of the forum coincided with efforts to create regional approaches to developing codes of conduct, anti-corruption commissions and similar initiatives. Participants considered the challenges of building and maintaining the public’s trust in government, reviewed regional and global approaches already undertaken, and critiqued the success and limitations of existing anti-corruption efforts. Discussions were based on a detailed briefing paper prepared by

NDI’s partner organization, the Human Rights Research and Documentation Trust of Southern Africa, a nongovernmental organization based in Zimbabwe.

Participants concluded that the region possessed ample political will to fight corruption, but lacked adequate financial and human resources in the face of competing policy priorities. They agreed that eradicating corruption, however, will require a comprehensive approach, addressing all sectors of society and incorporating legal mechanisms, implementation agencies and extensive civic education efforts.

At the close of the conference, participants promoted the value of developing joint efforts to advocate government ethics throughout the region. They also pledged to continue to explore issues raised at the roundtable in their own countries, including enforcement mechanisms and investigation techniques. Some participants sought specific assistance related to matters that had been raised during the conference. For instance, the minister of justice from Mauritius requested a copy of the South African executive ethics legislation and expressed interest in working with NDI on a similar program.

At the request of conference participants, NDI and the Trust plan to inventory existing anti-corruption measures in the region, including an assessment of their effectiveness and compatibility. The analysis will aid preparations for further deliberations with representatives from all 14 members of the SADC. This second roundtable will provide southern African leaders with an opportunity to prepare a regional platform for the 9th annual International Anti-Corruption Convention, scheduled to take place in Durban, South Africa in 1999.

*NDI is also conducting Southern Africa programs in Angola, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland and Zimbabwe. Another program supports elections being carried out by nine countries in the region during 1999 and 2000.*

## Civic Forum Inaugurated as Independent Palestinian Organization

While world attention has recently focused on a faltering Israeli-Palestinian peace process, a less public, but positive development has been the efforts by thousands of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip to assume new democratic responsibilities in the territory's self-governing authority.

*"We learned that if we have a problem, we can take it right to the people in charge."*

—Gaza Civic Forum participant

This transformation began in 1996 when Palestinians for the first time elected their political leaders, and gained some measure of responsibility over their own affairs. Citizens and the civic organizations that represent them expressed interest in the principles of a democratic society and the function that citizens can play in promoting better governance. In addition, a vibrant community of Palestinian civic organizations sought help with learning how to make the transition from service providers, a role the new governing authorities assumed, to public policy advocates.

In a volatile environment, NDI has provided a peaceful setting for Palestinians to gather information about democratic practices, and engage constructively in political dialogue and civic action. In June, NDI's three-year civic education program, Civic Forum, was established as an independent organization committed to advancing the democratic development of the Palestinian territories. The Forum has grown into a popular feature of democratic activity and boasts the

largest, nonpartisan grassroots network in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Through hundreds of moderated, community based discussion groups and the regular distribution of printed material, the program enables more than 6,000 Palestinians to both understand democratic institutions and practice democratic concepts. The discussions, held in conjunction with a network of local civic groups, cover topics ranging from the role of political parties in a democracy to the relationship between citizens and local government.

A recent series of six forums ended with a working session on "advocacy" that examined strategies Palestinians can use to become more active and constructive citizens in the political life of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. This final topic reinforced many of the principles learned in previous sessions and gained wide interest from the public.

In exercises during the forums, participants drew up plans of action to influence the decisionmaking process and improve specific living conditions in their own neighborhoods.

Today, Palestinian citizens take their lessons into the community by organizing civic activities to solve local problems. Veteran Civic Forum participants, armed with an understanding of their rights and a new appreciation for petitioning government, have called on governing authorities to improve water and sewer systems, urged action on pollution, started schools and sports clubs, built soccer fields, and volunteered their time to community efforts. According to independent focus group research, Civic Forum participants are more likely than nonparticipants to understand and apply democratic principles, and are more inclined to use dialogue and compromise to resolve disputes.

In Nablus, for example, Civic Forum volunteers recently hosted a town hall meeting to settle disagreements between the mayor and the municipal committee



At a Civic Forum townhall meeting in Nablus, citizens questioned local officials and members of the Palestinian Legislative Council.

## كيفية إنجاز المهمات



المنتدى الفلسطيني للتربية والتنمية  
UNDP

المنتدى الفلسطيني للتربية والتنمية  
2006-2002

More than 10,000 copies of *Getting Things Done in the West Bank and Gaza: A Guide for NGOs* (cover shown here) have provided Palestinian civic groups information needed to plan successful advocacy campaigns.

that had paralyzed governance in the municipality. More than 300 attended a heated three-hour meeting that ended with expressions of appreciation to Civic Forum for having provided an opportunity for open and peaceful dialogue. Civic Forum's professionalism and neutrality prompted requests for its assistance with organizing additional forums to address local issues in Nablus.

In addition to its regular series of civic education discussion sessions, Civic Forum, with NDI support, has established a unit that is training other civic groups in community organizing and advocacy skills. The program helps build the capacity of individual Palestinian civic organizations to advocate their concerns to decisionmakers and provides an avenue for participation in public policy. At NDI training sessions, more than 1,500 civic group representatives have learned how to identify a realistic program goal and create a strategy to persuade decisionmakers, mobilize allies and overcome obstacles to achieve their objective.

One of the groups with which NDI worked, the General Union of the



At a conference convened by the General Union of the Disabled, Theyad Aius, deputy minister of social affairs (left), speaks on behalf of the "access" law developed by the Union to provide the disabled in the West Bank and Gaza greater freedom of movement.

*"Civic Forum plays a key role in educating and raising awareness of people..."*

—Ghassan Shak'a, mayor of Nablus

Disabled, became a model for civic advocacy. An organization previously devoted to resolving individual cases of discrimination, the Union was able to successfully advocate legislation on disability access and organize a disability caucus in the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC). These achievements marked two "firsts" in the territories: the first time that a Palestinian civic organization drafted legislation that was subsequently debated by the Legislative Council and the first time that the Council established a caucus devoted to a specific issue. The Union's work represents a standard for conducting an effective

issue-based campaign for hundreds of other organizations in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. And the establishment of Civic Forum's training unit will help ensure the continued development of Palestinian organizations to undertake similar initiatives.

A comprehensive description of many of the successful methods used in the Union's advocacy campaign have been captured in an NDI manual entitled *How to Get Things Done In the West Bank and Gaza: A Guide for NGOs*. Distribution of more than 10,000 copies of the Arabic-language guidebook was accompanied by NDI forums that explained the manual's contents, and how the guide can be used to plan and implement advocacy initiatives.

*NDI is also conducting Middle East and North Africa programs in Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco and Yemen.*

## Guyanese Constitutional Reform Process Draws Inspiration from Northern Ireland, South Africa

Controversial national elections in December 1997 and ethnic tensions continue to affect politics in Guyana, an English-speaking country on South America's northern coast. Agreements ended a bitter political impasse between ruling and opposition parties, and committed them to pursuing constitutional reforms that are crucial to accommodating Indo- and Afro-Guyanese communities. Following lengthy debate, the National Assembly's select committee on constitutional reform determined the composition and "terms of reference" of a constitutional review commission and the scope of its work. The parties have been slow to pursue genuine reconciliation, however, and serious challenges to progress remain.

NDI works with political and civic leaders to overcome ethnic divisions that have eroded public confidence in the political system and hindered the development of Guyana's democratic institutions. In July, NDI brought to London, Dublin and Belfast a cross-section of Guyanese civic and political leaders to study firsthand the negotiation techniques and strategies used by unionist and nationalist communities during the Northern Ireland peace process. During the mission, prominent British and Irish leaders, civic activists, political analysts and journalists briefed the delegation on the negotiations, and principles and practices created to reach the historic "Good Friday" peace agreement three months earlier. The visit also exposed participants to the devastation wrought by decades of political violence in Northern Ireland.



Guyanese political and civic leaders listen to former Irish Prime Minister John Bruton (second from right) describe his country's role in negotiating a peace agreement for Northern Ireland.

### LESSONS LEARNED FROM NORTHERN IRELAND

*Miles Fitzpatrick, chairman of the Guyana Bar Association, wrote a series of newspaper articles based on his impressions of the Northern Ireland peace process gained during an NDI-sponsored trip to London, Dublin and Belfast. His concluding article in the STABROEK NEWS listed principles that could be drawn from the Northern Ireland experience. An excerpt follows.*

- "A basic goal needs to be set, the successful achievement of which becomes the purpose of the talks.
- The talks should be inclusive rather than exclusive. In Northern Ireland, the delegates were elected. In Guyana..., representatives of the civic sectors are to be included.
- It should be remembered that the aim is to achieve consensus. In our case, the need for a two-thirds vote in parliament to enact a new constitution gives a veto to each of the main participants. Therefore, neither should feel threatened by the presence of independent minds.
- 'Parity of esteem.' This vital principle determines not only how you act, but also your choice of words. All of us need to pay greater heed.
- Don't give up. If communication on one level fails at one time, try communicating at another level at another time. If you meet an insurmountable obstacle, go around it and resolve other matters, then come back to it again.
- If they can do it, so can we. Our walls are still only in our minds."

While the Guyanese were sobered by the trip, they were buoyed by the accounts of rivals who managed to settle differences, achieve consensus and shape an accord to end longstanding sectarian conflict. The delegates, who could recognize parallels to their own struggles, returned to Guyana with renewed hopes for the future of their country. Susan Moore, former president of the Guyana Association of Women Lawyers, was struck by the determination of the Northern Ireland parties not to allow the most serious and entrenched positions to prevent “engaging in serious dialogue in the spirit of compromise.”

NDI has also provided Guyanese decisionmakers with comparative information on constitutional reform processes. In November, NDI sponsored the visit to Georgetown of South African parliamentarian Mohamed Enver Surty, who described to Guyanese leaders the challenges of reconciling differences during his country’s historic constitutional reform deliberations. Surty stressed the importance of public participation in all aspects of the reform process and recommended mechanisms for political leaders to consider for building consensus. He also suggested that the media use its power to support and expand the process by engaging all levels of society, “not only about the content of the constitution, but also about their ideas on nation-building and their vision for the next generation of Guyanese.”

At the request of the National Assembly’s select committee on constitutional reform, NDI published thousands of copies of Guyana’s constitution, which had been out of print. Distribution of the newly printed constitution is designed to help stimulate popular interest in reform issues. The Institute also helped organize public hearings throughout the country to more effectively involve citizens in the ongoing debate. The Institute’s two-year project to establish a modern, well-equipped parliamentary library is also contributing to informed dialogue

on constitutional reform. Professionally trained staff have used the new facilities to assemble essential resources and make pertinent reference material accessible to parliamentarians and the public in the library itself and on the Internet.

## NDI to Launch Political Party Leadership Program

The Americas have a long history of strong, well-organized political parties, many of which played key roles in the wave of democracy that swept the hemisphere in the 1980s and early 1990s. Polls, focus groups and voting behavior, however, indicate that many political parties in the region are viewed by citizens as ineffective, corrupt and out of touch with their constituencies. This loss of confidence in political parties had led to the emergence of those populist leaders who threaten democratic institutions and processes.

NDI has developed a long-term regional initiative—the Leadership Program—to foster relations among parties in the hemisphere and promote political party reform and renewal. “Recognizing the important function of political parties in a democracy,” noted Gerardo le Chevallier, NDI’s director of programs for Latin America and the Caribbean, “NDI’s program helps emerging political leaders develop the skills to promote modern, transparent and responsive political parties.”

NDI will inaugurate the program in March by bringing to Washington, D.C., 30 young political leaders from the major political parties in Guatemala, Mexico, Paraguay and Venezuela. They will be joined by activists from the U.S. Democratic and Republican parties. Participants were selected through a competitive process based on the level of political experience, demonstrated leadership in

political and community activities, and commitment to strengthening their political parties.

During an intensive two weeks of course work, experienced Latin and U.S. trainers will help the young politicians develop leadership skills such as negotiation techniques, strategic planning, crisis management and effective communication to apply to their own party strengthening efforts. They will also explore mechanisms to democratize parties and expand their outreach. In addition, the participants will hear from a distinguished group of political leaders, intellectuals and academics from Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, El Salvador, Mexico, Nicaragua, Venezuela and the U.S. who will share their experiences with party development and address global challenges for political leadership in the 21st century.

Once participants return to their respective countries, NDI will work with them to implement projects of their own design—from enhancing the political participation of women and indigenous citizens in Guatemala, to building the training capacity of local branches of political parties in Paraguay. These activities allow the program to reach a broader audience within the parties and to build consensus about potential initiatives to strengthen the parties.

*NDI is also conducting Latin America and Caribbean programs in Haiti, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay and Venezuela.*

*“The Agreement is not a magic wand; it gives us opportunities, it gives us the tools. It is up to us to use them and it is going to take hard work to do it.”*

—David Trimble, Ulster Unionist Party

*“The answer to difference is to respect it and to build...democratic institutions that allow different people who share a piece of earth together... to work together.”*

—John Hume, Social Democratic and Labour Party

*“I think it is good that we come here to celebrate what we have achieved... but [this] would not be good enough, unless we face up all of us to what we have to do.”*

—Gerry Adams, Sinn Fein

*“I have come to the conclusion that it is quite impossible to build real peace without building respect.”*

—Lord John Alderdice, Alliance Party of Northern Ireland



President Clinton receives the Harriman Democracy Award from NDI Chairman Paul Kirk.

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NDI presented its 12th annual democracy award to the Northern Ireland party leaders and President Bill Clinton at a dinner on December 8 in Washington, D.C. The event marked the first occasion that the party leaders, representing nationalist and unionist traditions, had appeared together since the historic peace accord was reached on April 10. Nearly 1,000 guests attended the event including cabinet secretaries, members of Congress, business and labor leaders, and representatives of the British and Irish governments, including Paul Murphy, Minister of State for Northern Ireland and Liz O'Donnell Minister of State with the Department of Foreign Affairs in Ireland, who delivered remarks that underscored their respective government's central role in the negotiating process.

In honoring the Northern Ireland recipients, NDI paid tribute to the courage and perseverance of the political leaders without whom neither a peace process nor peace agreement would have been possible. President Clinton was recognized for his efforts to promote democracy and human rights around the world, including the critical role he played in advancing the peace process in Northern Ireland. NDI has supported political development efforts in Northern Ireland since 1985. Institute programs have sought to strengthen political parties and now assist parties represented in the newly elected legislative Assembly. (See related story on page 12.)

Senator Mitchell commended the participants in the talks for the risks they took to release old prejudices and undo centuries of distrust that had undermined previous attempts to reach a settlement.

Mitchell, who himself was lauded by the Award recipients for his role as chairman of the negotiations, recalled the emotional, final session following more than two years of deliberations. The marathon two-day meeting produced an agreement, according to Mitchell that “offers the hope of peace, political stability and reconciliation in a land that has for too long seen none of them.” Acknowledging the difficulties ahead in implementing the accord, he expressed his hopes that the recognition accorded the Northern Ireland leaders from around the world “will serve to encourage them and the people of Northern Ireland in the continuing quest of the elusive goal of peace.”

All eight recipients, speaking without notes, delivered emotional remarks that reflected their own personal experiences associated with Europe’s most enduring conflict. Humor was evident as was a celebratory mood about hopes for peace in Northern Ireland. At one point during the speeches, Mitchell paused to report to the audience that dinner remarks by the historic adversaries seems “so reasonable, so humorous, so brief” that one might infer that the peace deliberations could not have been all that difficult. “But I want you to know,” reported Mitchell, “it was nothing like this!”

NDI Chairman Paul G. Kirk, Jr. presented the award to President Clinton. “His presidency attests to his conviction that democracy is more than a set of governmental structures,” Kirk said. “It is a set of enduring values—protection of human rights... respect for pluralism and diversity, freedom of expression and beliefs...” He described President Clinton’s commitment to brokering peace in the Middle East and Bosnia, and his initiatives to expand, strengthen and protect the global community of democracies. Clinton’s leadership in these areas, “aligns our interests with our values,” Kirk said. “For the good of our country and for humanity, it is the



**President Clinton and Senator Mitchell confer during award ceremony.**

smart thing to do; and it is the right thing to do.”

In his remarks, President Clinton applauded the accomplishments in Northern Ireland and encouraged the continuation of the peace process, even through difficulties and “bumps in the road.” “[S]ooner or later, we all have to decide we can’t shoot our way out of our differences,” he said in referring to the pursuit of reconciliation in Northern Ireland and around the world. He urged the people of Northern Ireland and their political leaders to stay focused and to rise above their differences. “I ask you to continue your efforts, to keep your spirits up, to keep your vision high,” Clinton said, “...to remember how you feel on the best days when the worst days come around...”

*“...I am standing here representing my people, and I do so because... I know that each of us here has a small responsibility for saving perhaps...400 or 500 lives alone in the last three or four years.”*

—David Ervine,  
Progressive Unionist Party

*“[I]t is a time of change in Northern Ireland—it is a time to let go, it is a time to be done with the old dogmas and the old language, the violence of the gun and the violence of the tongue and it a time for us to embrace our new thinking and our new vision.”*

—Monica McWilliams,  
Northern Ireland Women’s Coalition

*“I got involved in politics...because my father was killed in the conflict...We shouldn’t forget the human cost of conflict and human sacrifices that have brought us to this point.”*

—Gary McMichael,  
Ulster Democratic Party

*“The time has come for a fresh start and a new beginning in Northern Ireland.”*

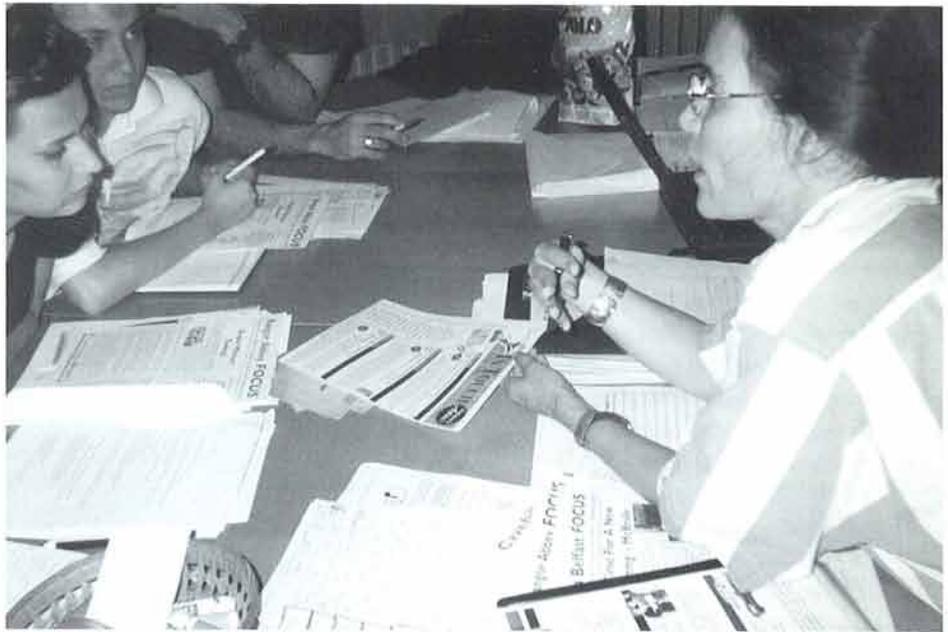
—Malachi Curran,  
Northern Ireland Labor Party

## Moderate Political Parties Learn to Compete in Bosnia-Herzegovina

Political pluralism is gaining a foothold in Bosnia-Herzegovina (BiH)—a country whose name is virtually synonymous with sectarian division and strife. Initial reports of BiH's September 1998 parliamentary elections focused almost exclusively on the unexpected defeat of Serb Republic incumbent President Biljana Plavsic, thereby indicating broader support for ultranationalist forces. Another story waited to be told, however—the significant parliamentary victories of moderate political parties whose steady growth in both the Federation of BiH and the Serb Republic could open the way for more stable politics and the growth of nascent democratic institutions.

In the Serb Republic, the hardline SDS/SRS coalition has lost 21 of its seats since the Dayton Accords while Prime Minister Milorad Dodik's Independent Social Democrats and Zivko Radisic's Socialist Party of the Serb Republic, both more moderate Serb parties, have registered gains. Dramatic increases were made as well in the Federation of BiH by the multi-ethnic Social Democratic Party, led by the Zlatko Lagumdzija, which increased its support from 3 percent in 1996 to 14 percent in these elections.

Since 1996, NDI has encouraged citizen participation in the electoral process and supported the long-term development of multi-ethnic parties amid an environment dominated by nationalist political forces. Before the September polls, the Institute assisted democratic parties in both entities of BiH with presenting their messages to voters and articulating alternatives to extreme nationalism. Through hundreds of daily consultations and customized workshops, NDI supplied the parties with the organizational skills necessary to compete more effectively, including sessions on communication, voter contact,



In a training session with political party activists from Banja Luka, BiH, NDI field representative Karen Gainer (right) describes how a party newsletter can be used to communicate with voters.

*“...opposition parties continue to benefit from the expertise of western democracy building groups such as the National Democratic Institute.”*

—International Crisis Group

volunteer recruitment and message development. In addition, public opinion surveys conducted by NDI helped Bosnian parties develop messages that directly responded to voter concerns—such as jobs and housing—and reduce the destructive rhetoric of division and hatred.

For the first time, political parties experimented with more creative outreach strategies—from conducting press conferences to establishing information booths in busy pedestrian zones. Voter surveys, once viewed with skepticism by party activists, were used for communicating with the electorate. The surveys also proved a popular recruitment tool, with many respondents signing on as either volunteers or new party members.

Heeding the message to strengthen its internal organization, one party produced and distributed “policy cards” to help candidates and party officials convey a consistent message throughout the country. In addition, a small corps of political party organizers trained by NDI conducted their own pollwatcher training programs, marking a milestone in the development of the parties. They subsequently developed a pollwatcher manual, whose popularity sparked a second printing to meet election-day demands.

The September elections witnessed a more informed and involved electorate as well as enhanced communication between candidates and voters during televised presidential debates, voter surveys and candidate forums, many of which were organized by local civic organizations trained by NDI. The Institute also helped build regional coalitions in Banja Luka, Mostar, Sarajevo and Tuzla, representing 110 civic groups, to organize a citizen-based election monitoring campaign. “The project’s success exceeded expectations,” noted U.S. Ambassador to Bosnia, Richard Kauzlarich. “NDI deserves praise not only for its role in promoting more visible citizen participation, ... but also for its delicate management of this program.”

## Slovaks Vote for Democratic Change

With their country's democratic transition in jeopardy, impressive numbers of Slovaks voted for the democratic opposition coalition in September's parliamentary elections. The opposition's victory overturned the nationalist and increasingly authoritarian rule of Prime Minister Vladimir Meciar.

The election's democratic outcome was by no means assured. Under Meciar's tenure, the government attacked legitimate political opposition as it promoted itself as the sole guarantor of the new Slovak state. Independent media was hounded, and civic groups and opposition leaders were harassed as polarization and fear characterized Slovakia's political climate. When elections neared, the government altered the election law and exploited state-owned media in an apparent attempt to ensure victory before the polls opened.

The triumph of a group of opposition parties led by the Slovak Democratic Coalition was prompted, in part, by an electorate empowered with objective information and motivated to use the political process to effect change. NDI's programs centered on creating a genuine democratic election framework, and encouraging Slovaks to actively scrutinize and participate in an election process threatened by government manipulation.

NDI supported Slovak nongovernmental groups that organized activities to counter the government's political transgressions and to safeguard democratic elections. Slovaks banded together in civic groups and associations to voice discontent with their country's move away from democracy and its growing isolation in Europe. Under the banner of "Civic Campaign '98," Slovak NGOs mounted voter and civic education activities designed to encourage voters to scrutinize and participate in the political process.

NDI helped establish and provided ongoing assistance to Memo'98, a media monitoring organization whose frequent reports of state and independent election



Leaders of the Association for Fair Elections explain their monitoring plans in a pre-election press conference before September's parliamentary polls in Slovakia.

*"NGOs took the stage in order to counter...mounting public fear...[Their] activities contributed significantly to the fairness of the elections and helped to prevent any interference in the electoral process."*

—Martin Bútora and Zora Bútorová, Institute for Public Affairs (Bratislava), in the *Journal of Democracy*

coverage exposed bias and helped Slovaks voters identify political distortions. With NDI organizational and technical advice, the Association for Fair Elections (AFE) successfully trained and deployed more than 1,700 monitors on election day through their "Civic Eye '98" (OKO '98) program. AFE also conducted a sophisticated independent vote count using sampling techniques that enabled the organization to accurately project election results, thereby providing a check on the government-controlled election commission.

The efforts of Slovak civic groups were supported by grassroots activists in villages and towns throughout the

country. Community leaders helped produce voter guides, conduct candidate forums and organize get-out-the-vote activities. During the past five years, NDI has trained these community leaders in eight cities to promote popular political participation at the local level.

NDI mounted its own monitoring program in the pre-election period, issuing reports that documented and publicized significant shortcomings in the political and legal process for the elections. The Institute also formed an advisory committee of prominent political leaders to assess the evolving Slovak election process. Committee members included: former Irish Prime Minister John Bruton; former President Jimmy Carter; former Russian Prime Minister Yegor Gaidar; U.S. Congressmen Steny Hoyer and John Porter; former U.S. Ambassador to Austria, Swanee Hunt; former German Economic Minister Otto Lambsdorf; former U.S. Senator Paul Simon; and British House of Lords member, Shirley Williams.

*NDI is also conducting Central and Eastern Europe programs in Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Macedonia, Romania and Serbia Montenegro.*

## Political Parties in the New Northern Ireland Assembly Prepare for Self Governance

The historic “Good Friday” Agreement reached last April not only sought to end Europe’s most enduring conflict, but also established the Northern Ireland Assembly, a 108-member legislature that represents the primary forum for cooperation and consensus building between unionist and nationalist communities. Sustained public support for the evolving reconciliation process will depend, in large measure, on a transparent and accountable governing process. Hopes are pinned on the parties represented in the Assembly as they assume a greater role in the governance of Northern Ireland. Through the new legislature, Northern Ireland lawmakers have, for the first time in 25 years, an opportunity to make policy and funding decisions directly on behalf of their constituents.

NDI’s program focuses on helping political parties in the Assembly build their capacity to govern in advance of a devolution of power from London scheduled for March. In November, four veterans of legislative politics, from Europe and North America, familiarized members of the Assembly—many of them first-time lawmakers—with the politics and procedures of building a responsive and representative legislature. The expert team included three current or former legislators, and a former senior legislative aide, who together share nearly 100 years of legislative and party experience. The program, held in Belfast, emphasized communication techniques, party discipline, workload management and constituent relations. Among other issues, Assembly members studied the role of the party “whip,” mechanisms for resolving disputes within a power-sharing government and practical methods for increasing communication with citizens.

In December, NDI brought to South Africa a delegation of party whips, who



Parliamentarian Peter Hack from Hungary discusses consensus building with members of the Northern Ireland Assembly. Also seated (l to r): Canadian provincial legislator and political party leader Elizabeth Weir; NDI Northern Ireland Program Director Sean Carroll; former U.S. Representative Chet Atkins; and former U.S. legislative aide and professor of political communications, Willie Blacklow.

*“Maybe those who have spoken to each other here for the first time will now speak to each other in Belfast—the importance of this should not be underestimated.”*

—Northern Ireland Assembly Member during NDI program in South Africa

meet regularly in the Assembly to negotiate the implementation of the Good Friday Agreement. Like their South African colleagues, the Northern Ireland lawmakers must establish an effective parliamentary framework that accommodates historic rivals. South Africa offered a model of how to strengthen political trust while making the compromises necessary to create democratic institutions. The visit was a follow-up to a similar mission in 1997 when NDI and the John W. McCormack Institute at the University of Massachusetts brought together leaders from nine Northern Ireland political parties with more than two dozen South Africans who negotiated the historic transition to all-race elections and democratic rule. Relationships forged in South Africa were said to have contributed to the success of the Belfast talks that led to the Good Friday Agreement.

The delegation met with provincial premiers; ministers and deputy ministers; and senior party officials from the ANC, National Party, Inkatha Freedom Party, Freedom Front, Democratic Party, the Pan-African Congress and the United Democratic Movement. Discussions focused on the new relationships among political parties, the executive and the legislature. The South Africans also shared their experiences on issues ranging from managing working relationships among political adversaries who sit in the same cabinet to creating strategies for involving parties outside of the executive with the development of social and economic policies.

The Northern Ireland participants noted the value of examining inter-party relations in the context of a power-sharing arrangement. As a result of the program, one participant expected a reevaluation within many parties of the relationships that will exist between a party’s government ministry and its own members in committees in order to ensure party cohesiveness. Participants agreed that personal and inter-party relationships in the Assembly would improve as a result of the visit. Better rapport, increased trust and understanding, improved working relationships among party whips were all mentioned as expected—and important—results.

## Democratic Setback in Azerbaijan

Despite promises to conduct a fair election, incumbent President Heydar Aliyev of Azerbaijan declared victory on October 11 in a process widely characterized as undemocratic. The presidential election in neighboring Armenia seven months earlier was similarly flawed. An election observation delegation from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), which included observers from NDI, criticized the conduct of that poll.

President Aliyev has tightly controlled Azerbaijan's political institutions since 1995 when controversial balloting produced a parliament packed with members of his own party. The government has tolerated, but carefully controlled opposition political parties and civic organizations. Until recently, political parties were banned from organizing mass gatherings or public rallies; many local branches of parties are still prohibited from opening offices or conducting meetings. The advent of a presidential election in 1998, however, offered real opportunities for progress in the Caspian Sea republic whose massive oil reserves and strategic location have long attracted surrounding powers, and more recently western investors.

Last summer, President Aliyev committed his government to political reform and democratic elections. The government's censorship body was abolished, which removed an important obstacle to freedom of expression. In addition, the parliament approved a new election law that included a number of reforms advocated by opposition parties and international organizations, including NDI.

According to a statement released last July by the Azerbaijan embassy in Washington, D.C., the election law changes "were designed to comply with recommendations put forward by the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), U.S. National Democratic Institute, as well as proposals and objections by opposition political parties

and individuals." The statement went on to assert that President Aliyev "considers that full implementation of the recommendations made by international institutions contributes to the comprehensive democratic development of Azerbaijan."

As elections approached, however, this commitment to a democratic process faltered as realities on the ground failed to live up to earlier promises. The campaign period was marked by a pronounced bias in state-controlled media and, on at least one occasion, police beatings of opposition demonstrators. Disputes over the final composition of the Central Election Commission further undermined confidence in the electoral process leading to a boycott of the elections by major opposition parties.

*"[T]he scale of the violations during all stages of the election campaign denies grounds for concluding that there was significant change towards democratization and free and fair competition."*

—Azerbaijan Civic Initiative

An NDI delegation, which visited Azerbaijan during this period, assessed the prevailing electoral conditions and political environment. While it noted some positive steps such as the election law reform, it also highlighted significant weaknesses including partisan appointments to local election commissions, media bias and conspicuous efforts to thwart freedom of assembly.

On election day itself, international and domestic monitors observed widespread irregularities. NDI's delegation recorded intimidation of local monitors, partisan interference in the voting process, evidence of ballot box stuffing, apparent voter list forgeries and tampering with official tally sheets. The pattern of irregularities, according to a statement issued by the delegation, "suggests that concerted efforts are needed to bring practice into conformity with stated

government commitments."

One of the positive developments in the election was the work of the Azerbaijan Civic Initiative (ACI), a nonpartisan group NDI helped organize in 1996 to involve Azeri citizens in the political process, and to promote a more open and transparent electoral system. For the October polls, ACI deployed 2,600 volunteer monitors throughout the country. ACI's preliminary report on the conduct of the elections, including detailed accounts of violations, was widely distributed to political parties, nongovernmental organizations, the media and the international community. Before the election, ACI conducted public forums and regularly issued publications to inform Azeris about the development of the presidential election law and other fundamental public policy issues. Operating with a multipartisan board to ensure its neutrality, ACI has emerged as the only independent civic group with offices in all of Azerbaijan's regions.

Following the elections, a number of major opposition parties signed a formal pact of cooperation. Since then, politics have remained confrontational. Hunger strikes and protests by opposition forces have been met by police violence and harassment of journalists. Opposition and government leaders, nevertheless, continue to consider opportunities for constructive dialogue, a development NDI has encouraged.

President Aliyev has promised to hold local elections in 1999 and parliamentary elections in 2000. The government has already begun drafting legislation creating local governments and planning the process for their election. Working with civic groups and political parties, NDI has initiated programs to promote broad participation in the drafting process. The Institute will continue to encourage enactment and implementation of procedures that foster a more open electoral environment.

*NDI is also conducting Eurasia programs in Armenia, Georgia, Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lithuania, Russia, Turkey and Ukraine.*

Continued from page 1

While continuity dominates many of Indonesia's institutions, profound changes are apparent in public attitudes. Current President B.J. Habibie, for instance, previously Soeharto's hand-picked vice president, has issued statements regarding failures of the past regime, reflecting an understanding of public expectations about political reform. Indonesians have also witnessed the proliferation of new political parties, increased civic activism and enthusiasm for dialogue that has moved the topics of democracy and reform to center stage.

During this critical time, NDI responded quickly with support for key political actors and organizations in their efforts to advance the democratization process. The Institute was one of the first international groups to assess opportunities for political reform in the immediate post-Soeharto era. Three decades of President Soeharto's authoritarian leadership had taken its toll with restricted political party organizing, and a population unfamiliar with political participation. An absence of legitimate avenues for policy dialogue also threatened to hinder the development of a widely accepted electoral framework, and endanger the legitimacy and success of the polls themselves.

One key to the success of elections in Indonesia is the content of legislation passed in February by parliament—laws on elections, political parties and parliament. At NDI's request, international experts have provided commentary on draft statutes as well as the final legislation, and have recommended ways in which implementation of the laws could promote confidence in the upcoming polls.

Elections in June will fill 462 seats of the 500-member People's Representative Assembly, the remaining 38 to be appointed by the Indonesian military. This parliament will be joined by 135 provincial and 65 "functional" representatives—drawn from labor, academic,



**At a workshop in Jakarta, Indonesian political party leaders discuss organization, strategic planning and recruitment with NDI experts Chito Gascon from the Philippines, Nick Smith from the United Kingdom and Krasae Chanawongse from Thailand.**

religious and professional groups—to create a 700-member People's Consultative Assembly that will meet later this year to select the new president.

Enacted following intense political negotiations, the new election law is without exact precedent anywhere else in the world—a complicated version of proportional representation by province combined with some elements of a district system. But the law itself provides only general principles; details about exactly how the system will work remain to be specified.

While aspects of the law have drawn criticism, particularly provisions that reserve parliamentary seats for the military and call for the indirect election of the president, there is broad agreement that the new rules and upcoming election process can advance the democratic transition.

On February 23, NDI issued an assessment of the new electoral framework and, among other recommendations, advocated a broad civic education campaign to explain the complex, hybrid election system that could create confusion among voters and political contestants alike.

Throughout the transition process, opportunities for increased dialogue are viewed as crucial for developing a more participatory policymaking process. NDI has organized forums in cooperation with leading Indonesian universities that have brought together international experts with hundreds of Indonesian leaders from political parties, nongovernmental organizations, the military, the government and academic institutions. They have discussed the electoral reform process and civil-military relations, among other issues.

NDI's work with civic groups focuses on the organization of nonpartisan domestic efforts to monitor the electoral process, and develop a national voter education program. In an uncertain political climate, such initiatives can help deter electoral irregularities as well as provide Indonesian citizens with crucial information about the political campaign and new voting procedures.

Building on its two-year relationship with the Independent Election Monitoring Committee (KIPP), Indonesia's first nonpartisan election observation organization, NDI is working closely with civic leaders to help build a nationwide effort

for monitoring the balloting at more than 300,000 polling stations throughout the country. Two major monitoring organizations centered on Indonesia's nearly 200 universities have also requested NDI assistance in planning and executing a parallel vote tabulation as a mechanism for verifying the official vote count.

For the upcoming polls, political parties in Indonesia will be competing in an uncertain political environment with new rules and competitors, in a system previously dominated almost exclusively by the ruling Golkar party. In the months since Soeharto's resignation, more than

100 new political parties have registered. With no experience with multiparty democracy since the 1950s, Indonesians have expressed interest in training and information about political party development.

Since September, NDI has brought party practitioners from around the world to share their political skills on party structure, message development and public outreach with newly developing Indonesian political parties. Groups of Asian party leaders have discussed common challenges to parties in the region while party leaders from Bangladesh,

Ireland Nepal, Thailand and the United Kingdom have assisted their Indonesian counterparts with creating party platforms and strategic plans that form the basis of party organizations.

*NDI is also conducting Asia programs in Bangladesh, Burma, Cambodia, Hong Kong, Nepal and Thailand. A regional program assists the development of an Asia election monitoring network.*

## DEMOCRATIC CENTURY FUND

Last year, NDI launched the Democratic Century Fund (DCF), a source of private funding designed to provide long-term investments for Institute programs in the following areas:

**Breaking the Grip of Corruption** by strengthening the rule of law and encouraging standards of public conduct;

**Strengthening New Democracies** where nascent institutions need support to secure a stable democratic future;

**Opening Closed Societies** when opportunities arise in nations currently under authoritarian rule; and

**Preventing Crises** by providing immediate assistance to democrats in places where such support can reduce the risk of conflict.

Donations to the DCF have permitted NDI to fund new democratic initiatives. These include the following programs.

### SOUTH AFRICA

NDI is designing the software for a computer system that will enable national, provincial and local governments to communicate on major public policy issues, thereby strengthening the principle of "cooperative government" as mandated in South Africa's new, democratic constitution.

### INDONESIA

A successful democratic transition will depend in large measure on a nonpolitical role for the military. NDI is supporting efforts to promote dialogue between civilian and military leaders and to enable military officers to study the experiences of other countries with integrating the armed forces into a democratic society.

### UKRAINE

NDI promotes accountable government and participatory democracy through its grants to civic organizations that use democratic methods to foster civic activism and build links between citizens and local officials.

We thank all of our "Partners for Democracy" who have made this work possible. NDI looks forward to our second year of the DCF and the opportunity to continue our work to strengthen and expand democracy.

Donors to the Fund include corporations, individuals, foundations and labor unions. NDI is a 501(c)(3) organization. For more information, please contact Mary Hill at (202) 328-3136 or by email at [dcf@ndi.org](mailto:dcf@ndi.org).

**MAJOR GENERAL WILLIAM L. NASH TO HEAD  
NDI CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS INITIATIVE**

In January, NDI named retired Major General William Nash as director of the Institute's global civil-military relations programs.

General Nash joins NDI from Harvard University where he was a fellow and visiting lecturer at the John F. Kennedy School of Government. During his decorated career, Nash served as commanding general of the U.S. Army forces in Bosnia and of the 1st Armored Division in Germany, and advisor to the Saudi Arabian National Guard in Riyadh. Since retiring from the army in 1998 after 34 years, he has taught and written on a variety of contemporary military issues, including civil-military coordination, military-media relations and national security challenges of the 21st century.

"Bill Nash's distinguished career has included service in some of the most challenging environments a military officer could face," said NDI President Kenneth Wollack. "From the Balkans to the Middle East to Southeast Asia, his real life experience and expertise will add measurably to our civil-military relations work."

NDI's expanded civil-military relations initiative builds upon and complements the Institute's ongoing work with elected officials, civic organizations and political parties in 35 countries around the world. Emerging democracies with a legacy of military control of security affairs often encounter special obstacles when political leaders do not have the expertise and oversight mechanisms necessary to manage national defense. In these settings, military leaders may also lack an understanding about the proper role of the armed forces in a democracy or be reluctant to relinquish their autonomy.

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