



NEWS RELEASE

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INTERNATIONAL DELEGATION TO OBSERVE NOVEMBER 11 GUATEMALAN ELECTION

WASHINGTON, DC, NOVEMBER 7 -- A 30-member international delegation will observe the November 11 election in Guatemala, the first presidential election since civilian rule returned five years ago.

The high-level observer group is sponsored by the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI). Bruce Babbitt, former Arizona governor and Democratic presidential aspirant, will lead the delegation. The delegation includes legislators, political party leaders and election experts from 15 countries in Europe, Africa and the Western Hemisphere.

The purpose of the delegation is to demonstrate international support for free and fair elections and for the democratic process in Guatemala.

The delegation, which will be present in Guatemala from Thursday, November 8, to Tuesday, November 13, will meet with Guatemalan presidential candidates, election officials, military officers and human rights activists. The group will divide into teams to watch the voting and counting in cities throughout the country. The teams will reassemble on Monday, November 12, to prepare a delegation statement and press conference.

NDI has written a 40-page report on the electoral process, based on the visits of two delegations in August and September. The report concluded that the elections should be administratively fair but that many people have been discouraged from participating because of alarming levels of violence directed against participants in the electoral process.

NDI, a democratic development institute chaired by former Vice President Walter F. Mondale, has organized international observer delegations to elections in Bulgaria, Chile, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Hungary, Namibia, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, the Philippines, Romania and Taiwan.

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