

News Release



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NDI NAMES LEADERS TO PARAGUAY ELECTION MISSION

WASHINGTON, D.C., APRIL 25, 1989 -- Canadian senator Al Graham, U.S. Representative Bruce Morrison (D-CT) and Chilean Christian Democratic leader Eduardo Frei will lead a delegation of 18 political leaders and others to observe the May 1 presidential election in Paraguay.

The delegation is being sponsored and organized by the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI).

The delegation will include political party leaders, legislators, and electoral experts from Latin America, Europe and the U.S. The U.S. component of the delegation comprises prominent Republicans and Democrats.

"I am extremely pleased that Al Graham, Bruce Morrison and Eduardo Frei have agreed to lead our delegation in Paraguay," said NDI President J. Brian Atwood. "Senator Graham led an NDI observer delegation to the May 1987 elections in the Philippines and was personally thanked by President Corazon Aquino for his role.

"Congressman Morrison has been one of the leaders in Congress in the fight for democratization and human rights in Paraguay. And Eduardo Frei is a distinguished fighter for democracy in his own country."

During the past year, NDI has supported the Asunción-based Center for Democratic Studies (CED), which was established by prominent

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conducting nonpartisan international programs to help maintain and strengthen democratic institutions

Paraguayan civic and political leaders. The Center has taken the lead in civic education and voter registration efforts in the run-up to the current election.

After more than 34 years of dictatorship, Paraguayans are hoping the May election will mark a definitive transition to democracy. The NDI delegation will not take sides in the election, but report to the international community on the voting and counting process. Its presence will provide support for the Paraguayan people in their desire for a free and fair election. The delegation has been formally invited by the Paraguayan government to witness the event.

While in Paraguay, the delegation will meet with government and election officials, leaders of the church and political parties, and representatives of other institutions that play a role in the monitoring process. The delegation will watch the voting and counting process in Asunción and four other cities throughout the country.

Chaired by former Vice President Walter F. Mondale, NDI conducts nonpartisan political development programs overseas. NDI received bipartisan acclaim for organizing the international observer delegation to the October 1988 presidential plebiscite in Chile and the 1986 "snap" presidential elections in the Philippines. It has also conducted a series of democratic programs in nearly 30 countries, including Argentina, Barbados, Brazil, Haiti, Nicaragua, Northern Ireland, Senegal, South Korea, Taiwan, and Uruguay.

Former Spanish President Adolfo Suarez and Rep. Esteban Torres (D-CA), who had previously agreed to lead the NDI delegation, were unable to attend due to scheduling conflicts.