



News Release

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NDI RELEASES REPORT ON PAKISTAN ELECTIONS

WASHINGTON, DC., NOVEMBER 3 -- "The process established by laws and regulations for the conduct of the November elections [in Pakistan] are highly impressive and compare favorably with those of democratic countries around the world," according to a report released today by the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI). The report notes that "irregularities -- such as intimidation of voters, multiple vote casting, last-minute movement of polling places, ballot-stuffing, and fraud during the counting phase -- can be detected by Pakistanis monitoring the process."

The report is based on an October 10-18, 1988 visit to Pakistan by a six-person, bipartisan survey mission. The visit was sponsored by NDI, which has closely monitored political development in Pakistan over the past two years. The survey group met with senior government and election officials, political party leaders, journalists, representatives of the Bar Association and academics in Islamabad and the four provincial capitals -- Lahore, Karachi, Peshawar and Quetta.

"The safeguards in place, the confidence of the contesting parties in the system and the new spirit of liberation greatly impressed the NDI team," said NDI President Brian Atwood. "The real message of this report is that those who would seek to manipulate the

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election will be swimming against the current in Pakistan," said Atwood. "If political leaders try to cheat, or cry foul when there is no foul, the system will expose them to their fellow citizens," he asserted.

In their report, the mission commends the Election Commission for fulfilling its responsibilities in a "fair and expeditious manner" and notes that there is a consensus among Pakistanis, including the military and virtually all political party leaders, that the elections should proceed as scheduled.

The mission concluded that "the election provides an opportunity for democracy to move forward in Pakistan."

Chaired by former Vice President Walter F. Mondale, NDI conducts nonpartisan political development programs overseas. By working with political parties and other institutions, NDI seeks to promote, maintain and strengthen democratic institutions and pluralistic values in new and emerging democracies.

During the past two years, NDI has sent four missions to Pakistan to assist the transition to democracy. NDI has also organized international delegations for elections in the Philippines and Haiti, and, most recently, sponsored a 55-person international delegation for the October 5, 1988 Chilean plebiscite.