

# News Release



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## NDI RELEASES REPORT ON PAKISTAN ELECTIONS

WASHINGTON, D.C., -- "The November 16 [,1988] elections were an historic event for the citizens of Pakistan," according to a report released today by the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI). Notwithstanding the "several immediate challenges that would test the capacity of any new democracy," the report concludes that the events surrounding the elections -- "the pre-election period, the elections itself and the post-election transition -- bode well for the establishment of a stable democracy in Pakistan."

The report is based on the findings of a 22-member international delegation that observed the November elections in Pakistan. In addition to meetings with Pakistan political leaders -- including President Ghulam Ishak Khan, the current Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto and the Chief Election Commissioner Syed Nusrat Ali --, the delegation observed the elections in each of Pakistan's four provincial capitals, the federal capital and their respective surrounding areas.

A major controversy concerning the elections involved the imposition, for the first time in Pakistan's electoral history, of an identification card requirement for all voters. Based on a

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comprehensive statistical analysis comparing the 1985 and 1988 results, the report concludes: "there is no evidence that the identification card requirement or the low, even by Pakistan standards, 42 percent turnout, affected any one party disproportionately."

Noting that Pakistan is a country that since independence has alternated "civilian rule with extended periods of military rule," the report suggests that "Pakistan's political leaders -- those in the current PPP government and those representing parties in opposition-- must now work to consolidate democratic government. Institutions that contribute to the resilience of a democratic society -- such as an accountable government, vibrant political parties, an independent judiciary, a vigilant media, democratic trade unions and a nonpartisan military -- must be nurtured and supported."

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 sent four missions to Pakistan prior to organizing the international observer delegation for the November elections. NDI also has organized international delegations for elections in the Philippines and Haiti, and for the October 5, 1988 plebiscite in Chile.

Copies of the international delegation report, Pakistan Elections: Foundation for Democracy, are available from NDI, 1717 Massachusetts Ave., NW, # 605, Washington, D.C. 20036 for \$6.00.

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