

# NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTE FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## American Institute to Sponsor Sedom Conference On Democracies in Regions Of Crisis

Fifty prominent government officials, politicians, legislators, labor leaders, and academics from Israel, the United States and Costa Rica will convene in Sedom from January 8-10 to study Israeli democracy. The conference, sponsored by the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI), will be held at the Moriah Dead Sea Hotel.

The bipartisan American delegation will be led by former Vice President Walter Mondale, who serves as chairman of the Washington-based institute. Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres are scheduled to address the conference on January 8.

NDI President J. Brian Atwood said the political development institute hopes to learn from Israel's experience as a democracy in a region of crisis and to draw lessons for new and emerging democracies facing similar military, economic and political pressures.

The American delegation also includes Senator Arlen Specter (R-PA), Congressmen Howard Berman (D-CA) and Bill Green (R-NY), State Department Counselor Edward Derwinski, former U.S. ambassador to Israel Samuel Lewis, New York University President John Brademas, former Carter White House aide Stuart Eizenstat, veteran news analyst Daniel Schorr, former senior congressional staff aides Patrick Griffin and Ari Weiss, Communication Workers of America Secretary-Treasurer James Booe, Philadelphia Councilwoman Joan Specter, AIPAC Executive Director Tom Dine, Jerusalem Post correspondent Wolf Blitzler, University of South Carolina professor Morris Blachman and NDI Executive Vice President Ken Wollack, a former co-editor of the Middle East Policy Survey and AIPAC Legislative Director.

The four workshop sessions will examine key aspects of Israeli democracy, with particular focus on security, political, economic and social issues. The conference will open on January 8 at a 12:30 luncheon with addresses by

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## Conference on Democracies

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Mondale and Foreign Minister Peres. Prime Minister Shamir will speak at a 7:30 dinner that evening.

The 30 Israeli participants at the conference include 10 Members of Knesset, cabinet ministers, editors, academicians from Hebrew, Haifa and Tel Aviv universities, as well as current and former military officers and government officials (full list of Israeli participants is attached).

The conference in Israel is part of a larger NDI project which will examine successful democracies in regions of crisis to determine those institutions and practices that have helped sustain them. After completing the study in Israel, the institute will study other such democracies, among them Costa Rica and Botswana. Leaders of Costa Rica's two major political parties will also participate at the Sedom conference.

"The success of democracies situated in regions of crisis defies the easy wisdom that the expedient needs of national security make democratic practices a luxury," said Atwood, a former Assistant Secretary of State. "The ability to cope with ever-present external threats and democratic governance are not mutually exclusive." Atwood said that the institute plans to develop a resource base that can be used by leaders of new and emerging democracies who are building or rebuilding the machinery of democratic government.

Established in 1983, the National Democratic Institute conducts nonpartisan political development programs overseas. By working with political parties and other institutions, NDI seeks to strengthen democratic institutions and pluralistic values in new and emerging democracies. The institute received bipartisan acclaim last year for organizing, along with its Republican counterpart, the international observer delegation to the Philippine election. It has conducted major democratic development programs in 30 countries, including Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, Haiti, Senegal, Northern Ireland, Chile, South Korea, and the Caribbean.

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