

News Release



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INTERNATIONAL DELEGATION TO MONITOR NAMIBIAN ELECTORAL PROCESS

WASHINGTON, DC, MAY 24, 1989 The National Democratic Institute for International Affairs announced today the first of three missions to observe the election process in Namibia. Heading the seven member international delegation is Senator Alasdair Graham of Canada. The delegation will arrive in Windhoek, Namibia on May 29 for a seven day fact-finding mission.

The purpose of the mission is to demonstrate international support for a free and fair election process as Namibia prepares itself for independence. On November 1, 1989, Namibians are scheduled to elect a constituent assembly that will draft a constitution.

In addition to Senator Graham, the delegation includes election officials and experts from Barbados, Botswana, Pakistan, the United States, West Germany and Zimbabwe. The delegate from the United States is Attorney General Fred Cowan of Kentucky, a leading proponent of clean elections in his own state after his office brought charges of election fraud in 1987. Serving as advisor to the delegation is Harvard Law School Professor Christopher Edley, Jr. who served as issues director to the Dukakis/Bentsen campaign.

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Under the terms of U.N. Resolution 435, the elections and campaign will be administered by the South African government and overseen by a special United Nations peacekeeping force.

The NDI delegation will review the legal framework and administrative procedures being set in place by the South African government. They will identify problem areas and report their findings and recommendations to U.N. Special Representative Martti Ahtisaari before departing Namibia on June 5.

The delegation will meet with government and U.N. officials responsible for the elections, political party leaders, and representatives of other organizations involved in the implementation of U.N. Resolution 435.

Senator Graham led the NDI-sponsored international observer delegations to the May 1, 1989 Paraguay election to the May 11, 1987 Philippine legislative elections.

Chaired by former Vice President Walter F. Mondale, NDI conducts nonpartisan political development programs overseas. NDI received bipartisan acclaim for organizing international observer delegations to the May 1989 Panamanian elections, the October 1988 presidential plebiscite in Chile and the 1986 "snap" presidential election in the Philippines. It has also conducted a series of programs in nearly 30 countries, including Argentina, Barbados, Brazil, Haiti, Nicaragua, Northern Ireland, Senegal, South Korea, Taiwan, and Uruguay.