

News Release



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NDI SPONSORS INTERNATIONAL DELEGATION TO PARAGUAY ELECTION

WASHINGTON, DC, APRIL 3, 1989 -- A delegation of 15 political leaders and election experts from three continents will 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 observer mission will be led by former Spanish President Adolfo Suárez and Representative Esteban Torres, (D-CA), former chairman of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute. Suárez served as co-leader of the NDI-organized observer delegation to the Chilean presidential plebiscite in October, 1988.

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.

During the past year, NDI has supported the Asunción-based Center for Democratic Studies (CED), which was established by prominent 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 representing a broad spectrum of political views are hoping the May

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election will mark a definitive transition to democracy. As in previous observer missions organized by NDI, the 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 vote.

"In organizing this delegation, NDI does not presume to supervise the election nor to interfere in Paraguayan affairs," said NDI President J. Brian Atwood. "We recognize that the ultimate judgment about the election process will be made by the Paraguayan people."

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 to 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.