



# NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTE FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Suite 605, 1717 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20036 (202) 328-3136 • Telex 5106015068 NDIIA

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## Press Advisory

Former Belize Prime Minister George Price and National Democratic Institute President Brian Atwood will lead a 24 person international delegation which will observe the November 29 presidential and legislative elections in Haiti. The elections, which are the first under the Constitution adopted in March 1987, are occurring under unique and difficult circumstances. The NDI delegation by its presence hopes to contribute both to the fairness and to the efficacy of the elections.

The NDI delegation will include nationals from Barbados, Belize, Canada, Costa Rica, Jamaica, Liberia, the Philippines, St. Lucia, Senegal, Trinidad, the United States and Venezuela. Most of the delegates have been following recent developments in Haiti through previous NDI programs.

The majority of the delegation will arrive in Haiti on Friday, November 27 and will remain through Tuesday, December 1. After briefings by the NDI staff on Friday evening and Saturday morning, the delegation will divide into six teams, with each team assigned to cover a specific region of Haiti.

The teams will arrive in their assigned regions on Saturday afternoon, when they will prepare to observe polling sites on election day. The teams will observe the balloting and counting processes before returning to Port-au-Prince on Monday. Following a debriefing session, the NDI delegation will issue a statement Monday afternoon at 3:00 p.m. at the Holiday Inn.

NDI staff will remain in the country for several days to monitor the completion of the counting process. The Institute also plans to organize an international delegation for the critical run-off elections.

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The National Democratic Institute for International Affairs is a nonprofit organization conducting nonpartisan international programs to maintain and strengthen democratic institutions worldwide. NDI received bipartisan acclaim for its role in organizing and co-sponsoring a 44 person international observer delegation to the 1986 "snap" presidential election in the Philippines. The Institute is chaired by former U.S. Vice President Walter Mondale.

NDI began working in Haiti soon after the departure of Jean Claude Duvalier. Its programs have focused on political party building and the development of the institutions, such as electoral systems, necessary for a peaceful transition to democracy.

To arrange interviews with NDI spokespersons -- George Price, Brian Atwood, Vivian Lowery Derryck, and Larry Garber -- please contact Michael Stoddard at the Hotel Villa Creole.

## NDI Program Activity in Haiti

The international observer delegation is part of a long-term program initiated by NDI following Jean Claude Duvalier's departure from Haiti in February 1986. To date, these efforts have included:

1) convening a party-building seminar in Puerto Rico attended by 17 Haitian political party and civic leaders from across the political spectrum and by political party leaders and election experts from five different countries -- this August 1986 conference led to a call by the Haitian participants for the establishment of an independent election commission;

2) sponsoring a fact-finding visit in December 1986 by a thirteen person multi-national delegation -- a report issued by the delegation in English and French emphasized the difficulties facing Haiti as it began drafting a new constitution and developing a credible electoral process;

3) sponsoring a five person observer delegation for the March 29, 1987 constitutional referendum -- the delegation congratulated the Haitians for their achievement in approving a constitution which was overwhelmingly supported by the population and also highlighted the difficult issues that needed to be addressed in preparing for the constitutionally mandated national and local elections;

4) conducting a seminar in June 1987 for Haitian political party workers -- the seminar, which occurred during a politically tumultuous period, involved representatives of political parties from several countries in practical discussions of parties' roles in democratic transitions;

5) coordinating a visit by former President Jimmy Carter to Haiti in mid-October -- the visit demonstrated further NDI's commitment to the Haitian electoral process; and;

6) dispatching a 4 person fact-finding team to Haiti from November 10-15 to obtain updated information on the political situation -- the information gained from this visit provided the basis for testimony on November 18, 1987 by NDI president Brian Atwood before the House Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere Affairs.