**Quarterly Report**
**MONTENEGRO: POLITICAL PARTY BUILDING AND CIVIC DEVELOPMENT**
**USAID Cooperative Agreement No: EE-A-00-98-00028-00**
**October 1 to December 31, 2000**

## I. SUMMARY

Amidst political uncertainty regarding the issue of independence, the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) increased its political party development activities this quarter. While maintaining work with political parties at the grassroots level, NDI focused on working with political party headquarters to increase and improve their organizational capacity and public outreach.

Given the increasing requests for political party training during this quarter, NDI expanded its political party development program by adding an additional resident representative on October 28.

In this quarter, NDI held consultations and training seminars with political parties (including high-level political leaders) on communication strategies, media relations, and branch office organization. NDI accomplished the following in the past three months:

- Trained 27 leaders of the Democratic Party of Socialists (DPS), including members of parliament (MPs), the president of the DPS Women's Council and the president of the Youth Council, members of the Main Board, and the headquarters staff, on media and message delivery and speech writing and presentation skills;

- Trained 21 DPS Board/Branch secretaries and presidents on branch development;

- Held two consultations with Social Democratic Party (SDP) leaders, including the party president and vice presidents, on: how the party is structured, how decisions are made, and how these decisions are communicated to the party's grassroots, and the role and structure of the Press Office.

- Trained eight leaders and activists of the SDP branch in Cetinje and eight leaders and activists of SDP branch in Danilovgrad on branch development; and

- Helped the Association of Young Journalists (AYJ) to develop an advocacy strategy to improve the rules for media coverage of campaigns.

## II. BACKGROUND

The victory of the Democratic Opposition of Serbia (DOS) in the September federal elections and the subsequent inauguration of the DOS candidate Vojislav Kostunica as the Yugoslav federal president, caught the government of Milo Djukanovic off guard. Djukanovic's party, the Democratic Party of Socialists (DPS), along with other anti-Milosevic parties in Montenegro, had decided to boycott the September 24 elections on the grounds that Milosevic's unilateral amendments to the Federal Yugoslav Constitution in July 2000 were illegal and that any election held under their auspices was illegitimate. The opposition pro-Milosevic Socialist People's Party (SNP) was the only major party to run in the federal elections and, as a result, holds 47 of Montenegro's 50 seats in the federal parliament. Since the fall of Milosevic, the SNP has tried to adapt its political identity, but it remains to be seen to what extent it is ready to embrace democratic values and distance itself from Milosevic's Socialist Party of Serbia. NDI continues to evaluate changes in the SNP and consider when it may be appropriate to engage with the party.

Despite this changed federal political environment, Djukanovic has continued to push forward with the quest for independence, announcing that a referendum on independence will be held in the first half of 2001, with details to be decided after Serbian parliamentary elections on December 23. But the announcement of a referendum on independence deepened tensions among and within the parties that comprise the ruling "For Better Life" coalition – the DPS, the People's Party (NS) and the Social Democratic Party (SDP).

Increasing disagreements over independence between the DPS and the NS have led to predictions of a government collapse and new parliamentary elections. On December 28, the NS announced it would leave the governing coalition because the DPS and the SDP, without NS approval, had adopted a platform advocating an independent Montenegro. People's Party President Dragan Soc said that his party left the ruling coalition because the NS advocates the preservation of the federal state, disagrees with the concept of two independent states and could not, therefore, support Djukanovic's platform.

The Montenegrin government must now either try to function as a minority government with support from the pro-independence Liberal Alliance (LS) or call early elections before the referendum on independence. If the latter occurs, Montenegrin citizens would likely vote three times in 2001 – in early parliamentary elections, a referendum and then in new parliamentary elections that, according to the Montenegrin Constitution, must follow a referendum.

With the growing likelihood of new parliamentary elections, a referendum campaign or both being held during 2001, there will be ample scope for NDI's work in the coming year. Given increasing requests for political party training seminars and the lack of democratic structures within most political parties, NDI has sought to expand its political party development program by adding an additional resident representative. The new resident representative will work primarily with party caucuses, other parliamentary bodies and political party headquarters while the current representative will concentrate on working with political parties at the branch and grassroots level as well as with leading nongovernmental civic organizations.

The long-term goal of NDI's Montenegro program is to strengthen Montenegro's emerging democratic political system through increased organizational capacity of and improved public outreach by political parties and through the initiation of direct participation in the political process by nongovernmental organizations as a means to promote civil society and broad-based citizen participation in political affairs.

## III. PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

NDI's representative returned to Montenegro at the beginning of the quarter, after spending several weeks in Budapest contributing to NDI programs related to the Yugoslav federal elections. Throughout October, NDI held meetings with a range of political leaders, discussing the impact of changes in Belgrade and planning for further training by NDI in Montenegro.

### Political Party Building

NDI's political party program activities increased during this quarter with efforts concentrating on conducting training seminars for the Democratic Party of Socialists and the Social Democratic Party. This focus on the DPS and SDP during the past three months does not mean that NDI is ignoring other key parties in Montenegro. Rather, it is a consequence of the fact that the DPS and SDP have been the most interested and successful in organizing training sessions recently. NDI continues to meet with and seek training opportunities with both the People's Party and the Liberal Alliance, but neither party was able to participate in any training sessions this quarter. NDI anticipates conducting trainings with both parties in the first quarter of 2001. NDI also maintained contact with the two ethnic Albanian parties in Montenegro and will continue to advise and train them as resources and schedules permit.

<u>Democratic Party of Socialists:</u>

*Media/Message Training:* In November, NDI conducted a training on message development and presentation skills for 16 DPS leaders, including MPs, the president of the DPS Women's Council, the president of the Youth Council, members of the Main Board, and headquarters staff. Actual party announcements were written and presented before a video camera, which were then replayed and critiqued.

*Speech Writing/Presentation Skills Training:* In December, a follow-up seminar for 11 DPS MPs, headquarters staff and party leaders was held on speechwriting and television presentations with participants critiquing each other. On the second day a mock parliament was set up, and each attendee was asked to write and deliver a speech as if delivering it in parliament. The group then critiqued the speeches.

*Branch Development Training:* In December, NDI conducted training for 21 DPS board/branch secretaries and presidents from all regions in Montenegro. The training concentrated on voter contact, campaign planning techniques and techniques for branches to serve their constituents.

Social Democratic Party:

*Leadership Consultation:* In November, NDI met with a small group of party leaders, including the president and vice presidents of SDP. The four-hour discussion focused on how the party is structured, how party decisions are made (particularly who is involved in making decisions) and, importantly, how party activities and decisions are communicated to the party grassroots.

*Consultations with the Public Relations Committee:* In November, NDI met with five leaders of SDP who comprise the public relations committee of the party to address a number of issues, including how a press office should be set up and the tasks that each person should set. The methodology of effectively getting the message across was discussed as well as the workings of a smaller party within a coalition government.

*Branch Training with SDP/Cetinje:* In November, a training program was held for eight leaders and activists of the SDP from Cetinje, including the branch leader, an elected municipal assemblyman, the leader of the SDP youth forum, the leader of the SDP women's forum and the technical secretary. The seminar began with a discussion of how the branch office should be organized, i.e., what lists it needs to have, what services it should be performing and ideas for running the office effectively. Then, a questionnaire development training was held, ending the first afternoon with group exercises on developing a questionnaire. The second day focused on a critique of the questionnaire and training on how to distribute the questionnaires.

*Branch Training with SDP/Danilovgrad:* In November, a branch training on questionnaire development was held in Danilovgrad for eight members of the municipal board.

*Training for Technical Secretaries of the Branches:* In November, NDI representatives traveled to Kotor to train technical secretaries and youth leaders from each of the branches on what the branch office should be doing. NDI described the activities of a typical party branch office and discussed the branch's responsibilities in the party's public relations. The need for and the most effective way to write and produce a newsletter were also discussed. An exercise was held on how to assess a branch office's performance using a questionnaire about the branch office's activities. The group discussion about these questionnaires enabled the more developed branches to share with the rest of the group the effective techniques they were already using. NDI also discussed potential activities that branches were not yet performing. The following day consisted of a series of simultaneous workshops on computer training, questionnaire development, planning and reporting.

Visit of NDI President Kenneth Wollack:

In mid-November, NDI President Kenneth Wollack met with the leaders of major political parties as well as with the representatives of the international community, including the OSCE and UNHCR, and attended a roundtable with politically active NGOs (Center for Democratic Transition, Association of Young Journalists, and Center for Development of NGOs). During Wollack's trip, NDI met with the following individuals:

- Prime Minister Filip Vujanovic;
- Minister for Foreign Affairs Branko Lukovac;
- Miodrag Vukovic, president of the DPS Executive Board and political advisor to the president;
- Dragan Soc, president of the People's Party, and justice minister;
- Zarko Rakcevic, president of the Social Democratic Party and MP; and
- Miroslav Vickovic, president of the Liberal Alliance of Montenegro and MP.

**Nonpartisan Political Advocacy**

NDI's program activities with NGOs focusing on political advocacy were limited this quarter due to the increase in number of political party training seminars.

*Center for Democratic Transition (CDT):* NDI met with CDT several times to talk about the structure of the CDT delegation funded by USAID/OTI to observe the Serbian parliamentary elections held on December 23. In these meetings, NDI encouraged CDT to view the observation effort as less of an opportunity to observe and more as an opportunity to learn from and work with the Serbian election monitoring organization, Center for Free Elections and Democracy (CeSID), on its observation effort.

*Association of Young Journalists (AYJ):* AYJ asked NDI for advice on how to advocate for more rational rules regarding media coverage of campaigns. In consultation with NDI, AYJ created a strategy, which it is in the process of implementing. Key components of this strategy are: the following

- AYJ created an informal coalition with the former communist journalists association and the independent professional journalists' association.

- AYJ identified short-term, medium-term and long-term goals. The short-term goal was to be invited to be an active participant (not just an observer) on the parliamentary committee working on the media rules for the referendum campaign; the medium-term goal is to have parliament adopt rules for the referendum that give journalists/editors the freedom and responsibility to report on the referendum objectively and during prime time news; and the long-term goal is a state media that is free from parliamentary party control.

- AYJ identified and contacted its allies.

- AYJ will draft a proposal for media regulations with the hope that this document will serve as the draft for discussion on the committee.

*Association of Young Lawyers (AYL):* In cooperation with the Center for the Development of NGOs (CRNVO), NDI conducted a training for the Association of Young Lawyers on December 16. CRNVO provided an introduction on the role of NGOs, and NDI led a workshop on the elements of successful advocacy and how to create an advocacy strategy to accomplish real change.

## IV. RESULTS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In this quarter, NDI saw progress toward a range of program objectives. Key parties have made more serious commitments to internal reform, party branches are becoming more active in party activities, parties are undertaking new steps to increase voter contact and input, and political advocacy organizations have gained both valuable experience in their work and, in the case of media rules for campaigns, a literal "seat at the table."

- The most significant result this quarter for NDI's efforts with the DPS is that the relationship has improved significantly, and DPS is exhibiting increased seriousness about the need for internal reform and skills development. At the meeting with Wollack, Miodrag Vukovic, president of the DPS executive board and political advisor to the president, said: "We now understand how we can use your expertise." This comment was a direct consequence of the party program assessment NDI undertook in July and subsequent actions to push DPS to take these issues more seriously.

- At the conclusion of the branch development training in December for 21 DPS board/branch secretaries and presidents, NDI received numerous invitations to conduct similar types of training in the individual municipalities for the entire municipal board.

- Based on the training seminar conducted with SDP for the branches, the SDP branch in Budva developed a new questionnaire and a newsletter. SDP branches in Cetinje and Herceg Novi are currently working on both a questionnaire and newsletter.

- As a result of the meetings with CDT, three of the CDT leaders went to Belgrade a week before the elections to set up the logistics for the other 17 observers and to shadow CeSID in its operations.

- The short-term goal of AYJ, as outlined in the AYJ strategy developed with the help of NDI, has been realized. The parliamentary committee is to meet soon to discuss the media rules, and the coalition has been invited to attend the discussion.

## V. EVALUATION

The addition of a second NDI resident representative in Montenegro appears to have come at just the right moment. The active training schedule throughout November and into the holiday season indicates not only that NDI has the resources available to undertake such programming but also that key parties understand the value of such work.

Of particular importance is the new level of commitment and seriousness on the part of the DPS. As the dominant party in Montenegro, but one which suffers from defects in its internal party structure and practice, training with the DPS on such topics as how to make branch offices more effective and how to improve voter contact and input is vital to achieving broader goals of creating a democratic society in Montenegro. The DPS must apply the lessons learned in training with NDI. NDI expects a full training schedule with DPS to continue, although the

pressure of early parliamentary elections will certainly have an impact on what training will be of greatest interest and most effectively applied.

In addition to reform of DPS, two other keys to democratic development in Montenegro are the development of viable, democratic rival parties to the DPS and the growth of effective organizations of citizen participation and monitoring of government.

NDI had good success in working with one of the other key parties, the SDP, although work with the other key parties in Montenegro remains problematic. A clearer commitment to democratic practice and values by the SNP will be needed before NDI can initiate a formal training program with that party, but true reform in the SNP (as the second largest Montenegrin political party) would represent a significant achievement toward making Montenegro more democratic. As discussed, the People's Party and the Liberal Alliance (representing different political ideas) both repeatedly profess a commitment to the kinds of training and reforms that NDI can support but have not delivered on their rhetoric in this quarter – perhaps because of their own internal efforts to adopt a position toward the rapidly changing events in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and especially in Belgrade. With specific training sessions scheduled for next quarter, NDI expects more results in the future.

To achieve the objective of supporting effective political advocacy organizations, NDI will need to increase its activities with these groups. The electoral calendar of 2001 will provide many opportunities for this, with repeated calls for campaign and electoral monitoring.

## VI. FUTURE ACTIVITIES

Political Party Building

As noted earlier, there will be ample scope for NDI's work in the coming year. The exact calendar of training activities will be somewhat dependent on the developing electoral calendar in Montenegro. With three different campaigns a likelihood, and the first one possible as early as the end of March, much of the training schedule could likely shift to campaign skills and techniques. But such training should provide opportunities for advancing NDI's objectives of democratic party structures and making parties more responsive to constituents.

In addition to further cooperation with the DPS and the SDP, NDI plans to continue cooperation with the Liberal Alliance in Montenegro (LSCG), the People's Party and, to a lesser degree, the ethnic Albanian parties. A training in early February has already been set for LSCG municipal board presidents, secretaries, youth forum leaders and women's forum leaders from the municipal branches of Niksic, Cetinje, Bar, Berane, Kolasin and Kotor. In early 2001, NDI representatives also plan to travel to Ulcinj with the two ethnic Albanian parties to conduct a training on coalition building and/or campaign planning. Finally, NDI plans to continue to watch developments within the Socialist People's Party (SNP). NDI does not currently hold training seminars with SNP and has had no contact, due to its role until recently as an ally of Milosevic. Changes in the Montenegrin political scene and within the SNP itself, however, may mean that appropriate opportunities may arise to promote democratic reform in the SNP as well.

NGO Advocacy

NDI will continue to work with NGO advocacy organizations on reform efforts, particularly those linked to political events, such as how media coverage of campaigns is regulated, how elections are conducted and how citizen groups can monitor both campaigning and voting.