



Quarterly Report
MONTENEGRO: POLITICAL PARTY BUILDING AND
CIVIC DEVELOPMENT
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April 1 to June 30, 2001

I. SUMMARY

Despite the arrest and extradition of Slobodan Milosevic to the International Criminal Tribunal for Yugoslavia, the former Yugoslav president continues to be a destabilizing force in the ongoing political crisis between Serbia and Montenegro. In the midst of a more than two-month negotiation to form Montenegro's government, his transfer has done little to smooth over the deep public divide evidenced in the April 22 election results. These elections failed to produce a conclusive victory for either the pro-Federation or the pro-independence coalitions. At the federal level, Milosevic's extradition prompted the collapse of the governing coalition, which will result in either a new government or early election -- the latter option further destabilizing the republic's political system.

The National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) is committed to supporting democratic reforms in Montenegro as it addresses the continued need for internal political liberalization irregardless of its political status. 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.

NDI conducted the following activities this quarter:

- Assisted the Center for Democratic Transition (CDT) in implementing pre-election day activities and implementing a comprehensive election-day monitoring effort, including a parallel vote tabulation (PVT);
- Held a proposal writing seminar for the Center for the Development of Non Governmental Organizations (CRNVO), a grants management seminar for the Association of Young Journalists (AYJ), and a proposal writing and donor relations seminar for the Center for Democratic Transition (CDT); and

- Conducted the first tracking poll survey in early April and distributed its key findings and party specific results in mid-April.

Specific results during this quarter include the following:

- CDT has more clearly defined its watchdog function in the parliament as a result of NDI consultations; and
- By implementing techniques learned in NDI's training, the Social Democratic Party (SDP) improved its media outreach and direct voter contact.

II. BACKGROUND

The main contestants of the April 22, 2001, parliamentary elections were the pro-independence coalition "Victory is Montenegro's – Democratic Coalition Milo Djukanovic" comprising the Democratic Party of Socialists (DPS) and the SDP, and the pro-Yugoslavia coalition "Together for Yugoslavia" consisting of the Socialist People's Party (SNP), the People's Party (NS), and the Serbian People's Party (SNS). The Liberal Alliance of Montenegro (LSCG) ran independently. Voter turnout was high with 80.84 percent of the electorate casting ballots for the 77-seat parliament. Results of the elections showed an electorate split on the question of independence - the pro-independence coalition received 42 percent of the vote (36 seats in the parliament), the pro-Yugoslavia coalition garnered 40.1 percent (33 seats), and the LSCG received 7.7 percent (6 seats). The two outgoing Albanian Parties, the Democratic Union of Albanians (DUA) and the Democratic Alliance in Montenegro (DSCG), returned with one seat each.

With neither coalition securing the 39 seats needed to form a majority government, intense coalition negotiations began in May. The DPS-SDP rejected a coalition proposal forwarded by the LSCG on the grounds that the Liberals' request for an additional five seats in parliament (at the expense of the DPS and the SDP) was unconstitutional. However, the DPS and the SDP ultimately signed an agreement in late May with the LSCG. Under the terms of the agreement, the six LSCG MPs would support a DPS and SDP minority government for one year in return for a government-organized independence referendum. The government also would pledge to pass a referendum law and call for a referendum within 90 days of the swearing in of parliament. The vote itself would be held within five months of passing the enabling legislation. As a final condition of support, the SPS and SDP elected LSCG spokeswoman Vesna Perovic to speaker of the Montenegro parliament.

In late June, Prime Minister Designate Filip Vujanovic presented an amended version of the government program in parliament. The amended version included articles of the post-election agreement, which stipulate precise deadlines for organizing the referendum on the Montenegrin state status. The LSCG leadership had implied that it would not vote for the government program unless Vujanovic included references to the deadlines. At the time of this writing, the parliament is still debating the government program submitted by the LSCG-backed DPS-SDP coalition.

With the extradition of Slobodan Milosevic, former Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) president, to The Hague on June 28, 2001, future SNP participation in the federal government has been called into question. The SNP was the only major party to run in the September 2000 federal parliamentary elections and, as a result, holds 47 of Montenegro's 50 seats in the federal parliament. Prime Minister Zoran Zizic and the federal ministers from the SNP offered their resignations after Milosevic's extradition (the party disagreed with the adoption of the Decree on Cooperation with the International Crimes Tribunal for Yugoslavia, which allowed for Milosevic's extradition). This act resulted in the commencement of negotiations to form a new government and the possibility for early election looming.

In this uncertain political environment, NDI has focused its activities on working with its election monitoring partners, the Center for Democratic Transition (CDT), the Association for Young Journalists (AYJ), and the Center for the Development of Non Governmental Organization (CRNVO), on proposal writing and donor relations. NDI also held a meeting with SNP leadership about future program activities, and began to organize the multiparty orientation seminar for elected members of parliament to be held June 6 to 8, 2001.

The specific objectives for NDI's program in 2001 are the following:

- Political parties begin to implement democratic forms of internal debate and decision-making;
- Political parties increase their direct contact with voters and solicit and respond to feedback from the grassroots on party positions;
- Party municipal branches and other functional units (i.e., women's groups, youth chapters, etc.) become more active in the life of the party;
- The parties become more open to the political participation of women and youth;
- Political parties improve the work of their caucuses inside parliament and more effectively integrate the caucus into general party activities including voter contact and media strategies;
- Political parties identify and respond to citizen priorities in their platforms and in their policies put forward either as parliamentary members of the government or opposition;
- Existing nonpartisan advocacy organizations become effective watchdog institutions and advocates for an accountable and transparent parliament and government.

III. PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

With the results of the April 22 legislative elections offering no clear mandate to either coalition, the month of May began with all political parties focusing on negotiations to form a new government. By the end of May it was clear that these negotiations would be stretched out for weeks to come. During this period, NDI held a series of discussions with party contacts and prepared for the July 6 to 8 "Strengthening Democracy Through Parliamentary Clubs" conference.

Political Party Building

Democratic Party of Socialists (DPS)

Leadership Consultations

In May, NDI met with Aco Djuricic, MP and main board member, to discuss the results of the April election, including the make-up of the candidate lists and leadership decision-making. NDI will continue meeting Djuricic in the future to discuss these issues. NDI also informed him of the intention to hold the parliamentary seminar and the women's seminar tentatively scheduled for the autumn.

Also in May, NDI representatives met the new party contact, Igor Luksic. As Luksic is a frequent attendee of NDI seminars, the relationship will progress easily. NDI also discussed its plan for a parliamentary orientation seminar on the role of the party caucus and the MP.

Social Democratic Party (SDP)

Leadership Consultations

In mid-May, NDI met with SDP Head of Media and Marketing Boro Banovic to evaluate the effectiveness of pre-election training sessions. Banovic cited that the leadership now understands the importance of direct voter contact as a result of NDI's door-to-door techniques. These techniques attracted more votes in areas that implemented them. Banovic also praised NDI's media training and stated the party applied several of the techniques during the campaign.

Liberal Alliance of Montenegro (LSCG)

Leadership Consultations

In mid-May, NDI met Executive Board member Sasa Markovic to discuss the election campaign and results. While some of the discussion focused on coalition negotiations, Markovic noted the party's interest in future training sessions on the organization of party structure, internal communication, and media outreach.

Socialist People's Party (SNP)

Leadership Consultations

At the end of May, NDI met with Party Leader Predrag Bulatovic for the first time. NDI staff used this opportunity to introduce the Institute's work as a whole and its program in Montenegro. When informed about the July orientation seminar for new members of parliament, Bulatovic responded positively.

Political Party Polling

With additional funding received last quarter from USAID, NDI fielded the first tracking survey in each of Montenegro's 21 municipalities from April 1 to 4 to determine voters' attitudes toward independence, party-based messaging, Balkan and/or international issues, and Montenegrin affairs, including quality of life issues. The poll canvassed 1,281 residents. A report on key findings was delivered to USAID and released to the media in Montenegro (see attached [key findings](#)). NDI poll results garnered strong media attention from TV and radio stations and was covered on the front page of Vijesti and Pobjeda. On April 12 and 13, NDI briefed the LSCG, DPS, the NS, SDP, and the SNP on the results of their specific voter universes so they could focus their communication on issues important to voters.

The main purpose of the polling was to demonstrate to political parties the utility of strategic polling as a tool to gauge and better respond to the interests and concerns of voters as they develop their platforms and voter outreach programs during this election cycle and beyond. The first tracking poll found a major portion of the electorate intending to vote with a continued focus on economic issues, such as unemployment.

The second tracking poll was fielded at the end of June. Key findings will be delivered to political parties, USAID and the public in early July.

Nonpartisan Advocacy

Center for Democratic Transition (CDT)

In April, NDI completed its election monitoring work with CDT. The focus of NDI's work this quarter involved final consultations and preparations for the April 22 elections.

Campaign Rally Monitoring

NDI staff assisted CDT staff and volunteers in monitoring more than 30 of the largest public rallies. In consultation with NDI, CDT developed a rally monitoring form asking if there were state resources spent, any violation of laws, or if there was an active police presence. The election monitoring efforts reported pejorative ethnic comments directed toward Muslims and Albanians at a SNS rally.

Voter Education

The biggest voter education challenge CDT identified was that citizens felt pressure from family, friends, bosses and co-workers to vote for particular parties. Therefore, CDT created a message promoting freedom of choice, voice, and vote. To counteract this obstacle and to generally encourage participation in the April elections, CDT employed the following five means of communicating with the public:

Television: Due to a small television budget, 15-second ads were produced with a storyboard for visuals and dialogue promoting the freedom to choose theme. The goal of the ads was to recruit monitors, and the ads specifically targeted northern Montenegro.

Radio: CDT's radio ad was 30 seconds long and included a five-second local song about freedom of opinion and participation. This ad served to recruit citizens to monitor on election day.

Posters: After much debate, CDT chose a design with mad cows for its posters. This unusual design drew considerable attention from citizens.

Leaflets: Used to recruit monitors, leaflets included the organization's message and mission, the monitor pledge, and a sign-up form.

Newspapers: Two newspaper ads were also run in advance of the elections. The first was a general issue ad prior to the Code of Conduct press conference and the second reprinted the signed code after the conference. Both newspaper ads generated many inquires directly to CDT's office.

Nonpartisan Election Monitoring

Throughout the course of the pre-election campaign, NDI advised on the creation and implementation of CDT's strategy to recruit election-day monitors. The vast majority of monitors were students from universities who were assigned, in most cases, to their home polling stations. In some areas, recruitment efforts were so successful that CDT volunteers identified all monitors three to four weeks prior to April 22.

On April 22, 1,468 monitors trained by CDT, in consultation with NDI, observed election polls in 90 percent of the polling stations. Despite proactive public education, 40 CDT monitors could not get into the polling place with credentials. The problem was quickly resolved and highlighted the professional response of Municipal and Republic Election Commissions. All monitors remained in the same polling place from opening to counting and noticed small errors and problems in the process. Roving coordinators sent hourly reports to headquarters emphasizing the overall lack of significant irregularity. For the few problematic incidents that did occur, media conferences and releases held violators accountable for wrongdoing.

Parallel Vote Tabulation (PVT)

With NDI's technical advice and assistance, CDT conducted a parallel vote tabulation (PVT), which is a method for monitoring the tabulation of votes whereby election monitors record results obtained from individual voting stations and compare these findings with official results. The PVT sample was conducted in two constituencies: one for the special Albanian seats and one for the larger constituency. NDI staff trained 14 volunteers to receive calls and collect data throughout election day. This election provided a special challenge in that the numbers between the ruling party, DPS, and the main opposition party, SNP, kept moving 2 to 3 percentage points until 11:45 p.m. Additionally, the People's Socialist Party (NSS) was below

(.03%), the three percent threshold that would give it two seats. This narrow margin complicated predictions of final seat tallies.

Organizational Development

While NDI's primary work with CDT focused on developing and implementing its monitoring effort, the Institute also worked with CDT representatives on developing their professional skills and organizational abilities. For example, NDI provided on-camera training for the organization's press secretary in advance of the April 22 elections. In June, NDI Deputy Director for Program Coordination Mary Markowicz trained four CDT staff members, including the press secretary, the financial director, the volunteer coordinator, and the PVT coordinator, on proposal writing and donor relations. As a result of the training session, CDT learned the following three critical points:

- Donors are partners, and relations must be cultivated with past, current and future ones. Donors also appreciate more information than just what is requested in grant agreements.
- Strategic program planning helps refine project goals, objectives and activities.
- A more comprehensive framework and implementation of its future parliamentary program is necessary.

Association of Young Journalists (AYJ)

During this quarter, AYJ released three media monitoring reports, which received much attention from independent and state media outlets. In April, NDI provided consultations to the executive director on time management and delegation. On May 31, Markowicz held consultations with the financial manager and executive director on grants management, including how to read grant agreements and how to meet reporting requirements.

Center for the Development of Non Governmental Organization (CRNVO)

Also on May 31, Markowicz led a proposal writing seminar for the executive director and three staff members. With a special emphasis on developing objectives and evaluation techniques, the participants assessed the following three points as most useful:

- Understanding the difference between a goal, aim, and objective.
- Identifying the connection between objectives and evaluation.
- Defining what a measurable objective is and how to relate that to evaluation.

IV. RESULTS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

During this quarter, NDI saw progress toward accomplishing the following two program objectives:

Objective: Political parties increase their direct contact with voters and solicit feedback from the grassroots on party positions.

- Based on NDI's intensive media training seminars conducted last quarter, the SDP noted the use of several techniques, including a more effective and productive marketing campaign, and the elimination of previously used techniques, which were expensive and ineffectual.
- As a result of NDI's continued training on voter contact, the SDP attracted more voters by employing personal voter contact techniques as a key part of the campaign.

Objective: Existing nonpartisan advocacy organizations become effective watchdog institutions and advocates for an accountable and transparent parliament and government.

- Based on meetings with NDI throughout the quarter, CDT has more clearly defined its future watchdog function in the parliament. With funding approved by the National Endowment for Democracy, CDT can further solidify and begin to implement activities.
- As a result of its May training with NDI staff, AYJ better understands how to manage funds independently and how to improve reporting techniques. NDI's April training advanced the director's management and delegation capabilities.
- CDT's PVT results, although they differed from the predicted results, served the purpose of preparing parties and the public in advance to accept the close election numbers.

V. EVALUATION

As a result of the April 2001 parliamentary elections, NDI altered its long-term political party building program to respond to immediate pre-election training needs on behalf of its civic and political party partners. Therefore, NDI has yet to implement training on such reform topics as party structure, internal and external communication, direct voter contact, and the role of the party caucus. With preparations for the first parliamentary orientation seminar underway, NDI is now on track with its planned activities. Assuming government negotiations conclude and federal elections are avoided, NDI will begin conducting training sessions in accordance with its approved 2001 workplan. In the meantime, NDI will consult with USAID to further refine program direction that responds to short- and long-term political realities.

Despite election-related modifications to its original proposal, NDI expanded the reach of its political party program this quarter by including the Socialist People's Party (SNP) into the Institute's training plan. As a result of the SNP's change in party leadership in February 2001 and new efforts to reform the party, NDI began productive discussions with the SNP about providing training for the party after the April elections. Immediately following these discussions, the SNP assigned its members to participate in the July 2001 orientation seminar for MPs.

VI. FUTURE ACTIVITIES

In the coming months, NDI envisions conducting the activities outlined below. However, these activities will depend on the formation of the government, the possibility of

the possibility of federal elections, and the date when and if an independence referendum is called.

Political Party Building:

NDI will implement its first training seminar with new MPs in July. The “Strengthening Democracy Through Parliamentary Clubs” workshop was well received by all parties in parliament, and by the new speaker, Vesna Perovic. NDI believes this seminar, that includes the SNP and the SNS for the first time, will set the stage for work on improving caucus organization and increasing political parties’ outreach to citizens.

While work to date has had an impact on increasing the role of the branches in the functioning of several parties, further efforts are needed. NDI hopes to engage more systematically with youth and women’s organizations in the parties to open participation in party activities. By holding a women’s training session in the fall, NDI will address this need.

NDI will also assess the impact of training provided throughout February and March, particularly as it relates to the conduct of the parties’ election campaigns. In terms of continuing its polling activity, NDI will complete the second tracking poll and brief relevant actors including political parties, USAID, and the Montenegrin public. Finally, NDI will undertake efforts to advise parties on the creation of “Constituency Service Centers” throughout Montenegro and to improve their internal structures, especially as regards the involvement of municipal branches and other constituent bodies (women’s and youth organizations) in decision-making.

NGO Advocacy:

During the next quarter, NDI will work with AYJ, CDT and CRNVO to strengthen their organizational and outreach capabilities. In addition, NDI will assist CDT in implementing its parliamentary program focusing on monitoring and oversight activities.