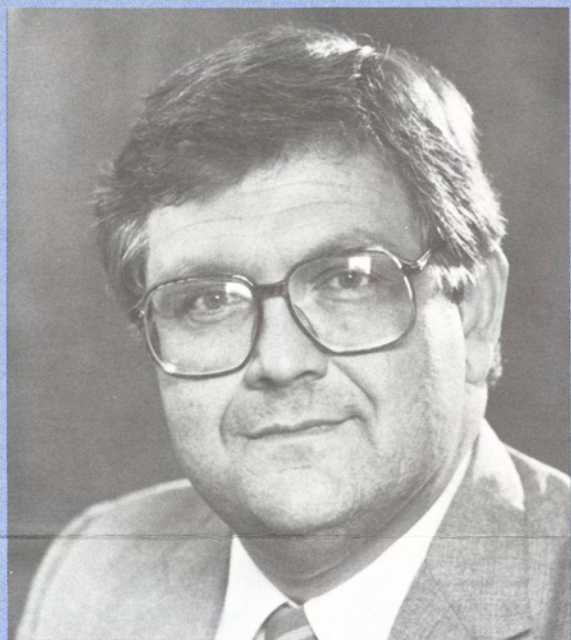




NRI News

SPRING 1991

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIONAL REPUBLICAN INSTITUTE FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS



NRRIA has a new president...

Jack Buechner, former Congressman from Missouri's Second District, was appointed by the NRRIA's Board of Directors at its January meeting.

Jack brings with him a wealth of experience in elections and party building, based on five terms in the Missouri Legislature and two in Congress.

"This is an exciting time to assume leadership of the Institute," Buechner said. "As democratic forms of government are evolving worldwide, the Institute is playing a pivotal role in advancing the principles of participation, power sharing, and free enterprise.

"It's ironic that for a minority party member, this Institute affords more opportunities to impact democracy in emerging nations than being a member of Congress did."

Buechner has targeted program development and expansion as top priorities.

"We're overwhelmed with requests for help from groups struggling to establish representative government in their countries," he noted. "We have to find the financial and other resources to respond to their pleas for help."

"It's not the kind of thing you say you'll do next year... 'next year' may be too late."

Jack and his wife, Nancy, have a new son, Charles, born April 8th. Jack also has two older sons, Patrick and Terry, both of whom live in the D.C. area.

Kuwait: NRRIA Hosts Conference on Democracy in Kuwait

"Democracy is a force which can no longer be ignored in Kuwait. We cannot and will not allow it." Those were the sentiments voiced by members of the Kuwaiti democratic opposition at the NRRIA conference entitled "Political Participation and Constitutional Democracy in Kuwait." As the first high-level conference on the issues of democratization in Kuwait since the liberation of that country, it brought Kuwaiti government officials and democratic activists together with American political leaders from Congress, the administration, and the Republican Party to discuss the "nuts and bolts" of democratic change.

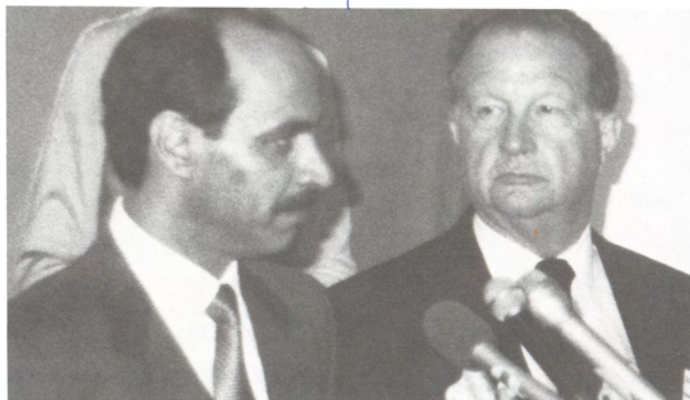
The conference was scheduled after NRRIA Board Members including Chairman Lagomarsino (R-CA), Congressman David Dreier (R-CA),

David Norcross, Peter Madigan, and NRI Program Director, Meg Thompson along with Congressman Jim Saxton (R-NJ) returned from an assessment mission to Kuwait.

Panelists, including prominent academics, political experts, and elected officials, explored the dynamics of political change in Kuwait. NRRIA Chairman Robert J. Lagomarsino joined Board members Congressman David Dreier, David Norcross and Peter Madigan in moderating the day-long series of meetings on Capitol Hill. Clayton Yeutter, Chairman of the Republican National Committee, eloquently described the role and organization of the American political party today. Later in the day, Congressman Jim Saxton discussed the role of a legislator in compromising, coalition-building and power-sharing.

Some of the most interesting moments of the conference came in the interaction of the Kuwaiti and the American participants. When it was suggested that there may not be a role for women in the future political framework of Kuwait, Ms. Nadia Al-Mudhaf answered sharply

See *CONFERENCE*, page 3



Sheik Saud, Kuwait's Ambassador to the United States, and Congressman Lagomarsino (R-CA), Chairman of NRI, address the luncheon audience at the conference.

Asia: NRIIA Team Visits Asia

The effects of the dramatic changes in Eastern Europe are evident in the calls for reform and the popular support for representative government that is now surfacing in Asia.

One of the first priorities of new NRIIA President Jack Buechner was to focus on program development in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. As a result, an NRIIA assessment team was sent to Nepal, Thailand, and Hong Kong. (A program development mission to Africa took place in May.)

Wedged between the two regional superpowers of India and China, Nepal has made marginal progress toward establishing the institutions that will support the country's new pluralistic society.

The first national elections in thirty years were held in May and it was clear that many of the nascent political parties are in need of organizational assistance. The NRIIA assessment team met with Prime Minister Kirshna Prasad Bhattarai, U.S. Ambassador Julia Chang Bloch, the full range of political party leaders, civic activists, and election officials to determine the role of the NRIIA in strengthening political institutions in the medium- to long-term. The NRIIA participated in a multinational election observation mission to monitor the May elections.

Members of the dissolved Thai parliament, party leaders, and scholars were consulted on the prospects for reforms beyond the current facade of democracy that currently exists in Thailand in the wake of the most recent coup. The level of democratic education was found to be disturbingly low for a country with such a high degree of economic development.

The portion of the trip spent in Thailand was used not only to

assess political conditions there but to explore program opportunities on the entire Indochina peninsula. The views of democratic Cambodians were sought on the resolution to the long-running civil war, the types of government that may be proposed after the war, and the priorities for democratic education and institution development that should be addressed by potential NRIIA programs. Similar discussions were held with representatives of democratic groups from Burma and Laos.

Two aspects of program development in Hong Kong represent new challenges and opportunities for the NRIIA. First is the high degree of economic and educational development in a country with very few modern political institutions. Second is the opportunity to develop such institutions in the context of a political system that will continue to evolve as the People's Republic of China takes control of the British colony in 1997.

Soviet Union: Preparing Soviet Democrats to Meet Future Challenges

Political, national, and economic cleavages continue to tear at the social fabric of the Soviet Union. In Moscow, protestors defied a Kremlin dictate banning demonstrations and marched in support of Boris Yeltsin. Results of plebiscites in the three Baltic states confirmed the Balt's support for independence, while the Kremlin's broadly worded



Stepan S. Sulakshin, Co-Chairman of the Republican Party of Russia and Cong. Robert J. Lagomarsino, Chairman of NRIIA at the U.S. Embassy Reception in Moscow.

Albania: Election Observed

An April 6, 1991 *Washington Post* article noted that the election observer delegation sponsored by the National Republican Institute for International Affairs was the only organization which formally presented a statement accurately reflecting the political situation in Albania.

The NRIIA-sponsored delegation travelled to Albania for the March 31, 1991 elections, the first direct legislative elections in the country. The delegation met with opposition and government leaders during the trip to survey the pre- and post-election political environment and to evaluate the election day procedures.

NRIIA President Jack Buechner led the eight member delegation. The delegates determined that the election playing field was uneven and that significant problems existed concerning the fairness and representativeness of the elections. The Communist government monopolized the scarce resources throughout the country, including media access, transportation, and

communication especially in the rural areas.

Furthermore, there were numerous documented cases of intimidation of potential opposition party supporters prior to the election, as well as retribution against opposition political activists after the election.

Other factors contributing to the uneven playing field were: the election law which was written prior to the formation of opposition parties, and therefore inherently hindered the opposition's ability to participate in the process, and the abbreviated time period between the registration of opposition parties and election day did not allow the opposition sufficient time to organize, recruit candidates, and formulate and disseminate their messages. The delegates noted some election day anomalies as well.

In a post-election press conference at the Congress Palace in Tirana, Congressman Buechner noted, "the Albanian people have won our ad-

miration for their perseverance and their willingness to participate peacefully in the electoral process under difficult conditions."

Since January, several NRIIA representatives had attempted to obtain visas for evaluation missions. The government allowed the representatives to enter Albania only on March 25, 1991. Nevertheless, two representatives were able to meet with the opposition parties and relevant government officials in the weeks before and after the elections. They were joined by six election observers who received extensive in-country briefings and who visited 75 polling locations throughout the country on election day.

Sources within Albania confirm that new legislative elections will be scheduled within six months, following the drafting and promulgation of a new constitution. In the interim, the NRIIA hopes to work with the opposition in the formulation of stable and effective political institutions.

(Note: Copies of the International Delegation Report detailing the findings of the election observer mission to the March 1991 elections in Albania will be available directly from the NRIIA.)

referendum on the Union question produced a measured endorsement of a continued Union arrangement. In the Ukraine, and throughout the Soviet Union, scores of mines lie idle as striking miners present increasing political demands, which include calls for the resignation of the all-Union government. To the south, fighting between Georgian and Ossetian militias over the territorial integrity of South Ossetia continues to claim lives and destabilize the political situation in Georgia. This fluid environment, while clouding the course of future developments in the Soviet Union, provides various opportunities for NRIIA programming.

The NRIIA Soviet Union program for FY91 focuses on political party building with an instructional emphasis on organization, communication, mobilization techniques,

El Salvador: NRIIA Lends Election Support

El Salvador, Central America's smallest nation and whose conflict over the existence of democratic government and social justice has cost more than 70,000 lives and deep social polarization, once again went to the polls on March 10, 1991 to elect members to the National Assembly and the mayors and town councils in 262 municipalities.

Although this was the fourth time the people of El Salvador cast their votes on this local level, these elections marked the first occasion that the political left participated broadly. To witness this historic event and lend international support, the NRIIA conducted its largest ever multi-partisan and international observer mission. Comprised of 63 members and representing 11 nations, the delegation was led by Congressman Cass Ballenger (R-NC) and Misael Pastrana Borrero, the former President of the Republic of Colombia.

Over 130 polling sites were observed on election day as the delegation divided into 14 teams to cover every department in the country. Upon reporting their findings at the end of the day, each team was "...struck by the extraordinary spirit and manifestation of reconciliation and coopera-

tion between members of competing political factions."

The preliminary findings which were released to the international press following the elections can be summarized by the following:

- Although there were procedural irregularities, they were neither systematic nor of a sufficient magnitude to reflect attempts to subvert the process.
- Voting activities appeared to be orderly; however, a considerable level of confusion was noted at the opening of many polling sites, and a lack of understanding of the process appeared to frustrate some voters.

The delegation concluded that "This election is a major step forward in the consolidation of democracy in El Salvador," one which will allow "...the newly elected officials to assume their office with the confidence of a genuine mandate."

The NRIIA plans to launch a post-electoral program in El Salvador in support of this new multi-party system. The program, supported by the Agency for International Development, will continue the NRIIA's long-standing involvement and commitment to the growth of democratic institutions in Central America.

(Note: Copies of the International Delegation Report detailing the findings of the election observer mission to the March 1991 elections in El Salvador will be available directly from the NRIIA.)

CONFERENCE (from page 1)



Linda DiVall, American Viewpoint (left) and David Norcross, NRI General Counsel, listen as Mrs. Hamad Al-Joua'n recalls her husband's assassination attempt, and her recent experiences in Kuwait.

with a question. "If you had fought for the freedom of this country, wouldn't you care enough about its future to want a vote — to demand a voice?" Ms. Mudhaf painted a vivid picture of her experiences as a freedom fighter in Kuwait City under Iraqi occupation.

Various panel discussions brought to light questions unique to the religious and political setting of Kuwait: What role do religious traditions play within the developing political framework? What are the influences of traditional lines of authority and loyalty in defining political issues and movements? How does a country reconcile international norms with a local, distinctive tradition perceived to be unassailable?

One of the most memorable moments of the conference came when Mrs. Hamad Al-Joua'n, the wife of a prominent democratic leader who survived an assassination attempt in March, addressed the audience. In a clearly emotional testimony, Mrs. Al-Joua'n recalled her experience in occupied Kuwait.

Expressing concern, one participant noted that, "this conference is a wonderful opportunity, but we must remember that it's only one step in the establishment of a democratic process in Kuwait — the most difficult are yet to come." In light of the solid success of the conference, the National Republican Institute is moving forward with long-term planning for Kuwait and other programming in the Middle East.

Yugoslavia: Republic Elections

The National Republican Institute for International Affairs sponsored four election observer missions in Yugoslavia during November and December 1990. The delegations evaluated the pre-election campaign environment and election day procedures in the Republics of Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Macedonia, as well as, the second round voting in Serbia and Macedonia.

The delegations concluded that the elections were an important beginning in the country's democratization. In each republic, delegates noted election day

anomalies, problems with the voter registry, and ambiguous military voting procedures. Throughout the Republic of Serbia, the former Communists, renamed the Socialist Party of Serbia, prevented the opposition from accessing the media on an equitable basis, thereby hindering the spread of the opposition's political message. Allocation of resources to the parties was also uneven. The "Socialists" retained the headquarters, personnel, vehicles, and financial resources of the former Communist party. There were similar, although less tangible, examples of maneuvering on the

part of the former Communists in the Republic of Montenegro.

Secretary of Labor Lynn Martin and NRIIA Board Member Phyllis Kaminsky led the 23 member delegation for the elections in the Republics of Serbia and Montenegro. In a statement presented by the delegation leadership, some election day procedural irregularities and concern over the use of state resources were highlighted. Several weeks after the elections, it was discovered that the Serbian National Assembly ordered the printing of over two billion dollars worth of Yugoslav dinar to pay wages and pensions due before the election. Not only did the unilateral action undermine the economic recovery plan for the Yugoslav Federation, but it gave further credence to the concerns

raised by the NRIIA delegation of absolute control by the ruling party at all stages of the election.

In the Republic of Serbia, the Socialist Party won 194 out of 250 seats in the National Assembly. The League of Communists of Montenegro won 83 out of 125 seats in that Republic's National Assembly.

The elections in the republics of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia were distinguished by the strength of the ethnic-based political parties. According to the electoral law in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the National Assembly is comprised of a proportional representation of Serbs, Croats, and Muslims, which is consistent with the ethnic make-up of the Republic. In the final analysis,

See *YUGOSLAVIA*, page 4

SOVIETS (from page 2)

electoral competitiveness, and legislative strategy. Political education and training will be geared toward assisting a spectrum of parties within democratic coalitions, such as the Democratic Russia Movement, Rukh in the Ukraine, and the Baltic Popular Fronts.

The formulation of the NRIIA Soviet program was based on the findings of two assessment missions conducted in 1990. NRIIA Chairman Robert Lagomarsino and General Counsel David Norcross participated in the second mission in December. During five days of meetings, this NRIIA mission met with over 35 representatives from political parties, local governing bodies, civic groups, youth organizations, the mass media, the Baltic consulates, and the U.S. Embassy in Moscow.

In the coming months, the NRIIA will be administering a political education conference in Moscow and a series of training seminars in the republics. The conference will assist party representatives in understanding the roles, tasks, responsibilities, organizational requirements, and processes of a political party in a multi-party democracy. Beyond Moscow, the NRIIA will be conducting training seminars in the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic, the Baltic states, the Ukraine, Georgia, and Moldavia. The focus of each seminar will vary from republic to republic based on different levels of political development. Via these initiatives, the NRIIA aims to prepare political parties in the Soviet Union to meet future challenges in the areas of civic education, electoral competition, and governance.

YUGOSLAVIA

(from page 3)

the National Assembly is comprised approximately of one-third Serbs, one-third Croats, and one-third Muslims as is the collective Presidency.

In the Republic of Macedonia, the Macedonian and Albanian ethnic parties showed the greatest strength at the polls. The reformed Communists, known as the League of Communists-Party of Democratic Transformation, hold about one-third of the National Assembly seats in the Republic.

NRIIA programming in Yugoslavia began in April 1990, when the NRI sponsored an observer mission for the multi-party elections in the Republic of Croatia, where the Croatian nationalist party, the Croatian Democratic Union, led by Croatian President Franjo Tudjman won the majority of seats in the National Assembly.

(Note: Copies of the International Delegation Report detailing the findings of the election observer mission are available directly from the NRIIA.)

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