



CENTER ON DEMOCRACY, DEVELOPMENT, AND THE RULE OF LAW

Symposium on New Efforts to Promote Democracy

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Stanford University

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Center on Democracy, Development and the Rule of Law (CDDRL)
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PREFACE

From May 31 to June 1, 2007, the Taiwan Democracy Program, CDDRL and FSI sponsored a symposium at Stanford University on new directions and initiatives in democracy promotion around the world. Twenty-five activists, policymakers, scholars, and political leaders gathered to discuss diverse experiences in creating and directing organizations that address the many facets of building and strengthening democracy. Panels comprising representatives from primarily nongovernmental democracy promotion efforts in Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, Latin America, and North America discussed past undertakings and present endeavors. In addition to candid discussion and information exchange, the symposium organizers sought to build new networks across representatives from government and civil society in various regions of the world. An additional objective was to identify most promising project and issue areas in democracy promotion work.

The meeting was conducted under Chatham House Rules in order to encourage open discussion. This report does not quote participants by name.

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENTS

The opening session began with a welcome and statement on the purpose of the gathering: to parse through lessons learned by more established democracy promotion organizations and also consider the innovative work of newer organizations in a growing field. With this in mind, one objective is to share and compare lessons learned across older and newer efforts. A second objective is to apply these lessons to strategic thinking about new directions and priorities. Third, the symposium is an effort to generate practical ideas for new partnerships and programming. Having a diverse group of practitioners and scholars seated around the table also contributes to the cross-fertilization of ideas and perspectives.

CDDRL (<http://cddrl.stanford.edu/>) is interested in convening this symposium as part of ongoing efforts to examine and evaluate, using state-of-the-art academic research methods, external efforts at democracy promotion, including all forms of democracy assistance.

PANEL I: ESTABLISHED EFFORTS TO PROMOTE DEMOCRACY: EVOLUTION OF STRATEGY, PRIORITIES, AND PROGRAMS

The first portion of this panel included presentations on the strategic planning behind two established democracy promotion organizations in the U.S. Speakers discussed general organizational principles and change in democracy promotion priorities over time, then considered the relationship between their organizations' goals and broader development efforts.

The National Endowment for Democracy (<http://www.ned.org/>)

Twenty-five years ago, President Reagan delivered his Westminister Address (http://www.reagansheritage.org/html/reagan06_08_82.shtml), which led to the founding of NED. At this time, many critics perceived democracy promotion efforts as part of a global American crusade against communism, and the early NED founders concentrated early efforts on establishing credibility. Over time, organizational objectives shifted with respect to both changing national goals and the international context. The strategic planning process can be divided into 5 phases:

- *Phase 1. 1984 Statement of Principles:* After six months of discussion, the board issued a Statement of Principles and Objectives, which identified three programmatic categories to support through global grants programs:
 - 1) fostering institutional pluralism (including support to labor, business, and other key groups),
 - 2) supporting elections and democratic processes, and
 - 3) promoting democratic values in education, culture and media efforts.

This latter category included support to dissidents in the communist world and was the most controversial aspect of the early strategic phase. This document also acknowledged the importance of promoting and diffusing ideas in democracy promotion, and a product of this was a twenty-six country study of democracy and creation of the *Journal of Democracy*.

International cooperative efforts, particularly with the German party foundations, were also a part of the framework. More practically, this phase saw NED building a political constituency for its work and promoting democratic developments in places studied by academics, such as Chile and Argentina, to places where the NED organizers perceived opportunities, such as in South Africa and Poland.

- *Phase 2. Post-Cold War debates:* During this early post-Cold War period, the debate within NED concerned narrowing the organization’s focus to certain parts of the world or remaining global in scope. The eventual decision was to remain global, and it derived from both political exigencies (i.e., avoiding “Benin neglect”) and NED’s own sense of identity as a global organization. During this period, NED also identified its comparative advantage vis-à-vis bigger players such as USAID:
 - 1) the NED’s non-governmental status allowed it to be quick and flexible in project implementation,
 - 2) it retained a multi-sector focus, working with parties, labor, and business, and
 - 3) its exclusive focus on democracy promotion lent organizational cohesion.
- *Phase 3. Late 1990s budget austerities:* During this period, there was a sense that the U.S. was unchallenged in the world, and funding for democracy promotion suffered reductions. To cope with this, NED shifted its focus to international networking as a way to leverage maximum gains from limited funds.

- *Phase 4. Post-9/11 realities:* In the post-9/11 world, the dominant issue became democracy promotion in the Muslim world. Furthermore, in its constant efforts to remain abreast of global trends in democratic development, the NED's 2002 strategy document identified four categories of target countries (i.e., post-conflict, authoritarian, semi-democratic, and newly-democratic).
- *Present concerns.* Distributed to participants of this symposium, the NED's latest strategy document considers backlash against democracy building in various parts of the world. Challenges have been identified in Russia, Venezuela, Uzbekistan, Belarus, and Zimbabwe, to name a few countries. China is also a prominent example because many non-democratic leaders look to China as an alternative model of non-democratic economic development, and China has shown interest in supporting non-democracies. There is debate as to whether a global reverse wave of democracy is taking place and, if so, how to counter it. An additional concern is whether democracy promotion organizations, in becoming more professionalized and bureaucratic, have lost touch with democracy activists on the ground.

Recommendations and lessons learned:

1. Early efforts must be about establishing an organization that takes into account the identity of the home country and this country's national and international aspirations;
2. In all practical work, the importance of advancing democratic ideas should remain an important priority;
3. A cooperative network across North American and European democracy promotion organizations has not yet formed, though there were early efforts;
4. A world democratic movement has taken root, but there is also evidence of a reverse wave of democracy in various parts of the world.

National Democratic Institute (<http://www.ndi.org>)

Over twenty years old, NDI has expanded to comprise over 1,500 employees around the world and a budget of over US\$130 million. The NDI's strategic evolution can be divided into three phases:

- *Phase 1. Early development:* The board initially determined that NDI would not go abroad or interfere in the affairs of other countries, but the advent of popular movements in countries such as Poland, the Philippines, and South Africa brought the NDI planners out of their isolationist stance. Accordingly, NDI developed a specialty in civic action (e.g., domestic election monitoring, increasing citizen involvement). Post-1989, NDI also responded to

global demand for experts in democratic institution-building, which also required the creation of regional and country offices. Throughout this expansion of programs abroad, NDI focused on building trust relationships with local democracy groups.

- *Phase 2. Advent of democracy-building as development strategy:* During the early- and mid-1990s, there was a shift to incorporating democracy promotion within the U.S. government's development and foreign policy objectives. While funding was more readily available, one disadvantage of this merging was an increase in the bureaucratic constraints placed on the NDI's work. For example, reporting became more intricate and there was a shift to results orientation in project evaluation. The NDI's office directors, during this period, were expected not only to be experts but also managers.
- *Phase 3. The post-9/11 world:* Whereas democracy promotion in the Middle East was an area of neglect during the 1996 to 2001 period, it became a central facet of the Bush administration's foreign policy post-9/11. The failures of the Iraq War have, at best, neutralized efforts at democracy promotion in the region, and by 2006 the influence of U.S. democracy promotion efforts have waned dramatically.

Recommendations and lessons learned:

1. As NDI matured organizationally, it developed 1) regional offices and 2) functional teams to address various project areas such as governance, civil society development, political parties, and democratic institutions;
2. In response to decentralization of USAID decision making during the 1990s, NDI also devolved much more decision-making authority to field managers;
3. In response to pushback from the Iraq War, NDI has focused on reframing democracy to emphasize linkages between democracy and poverty alleviation, democracy and reductions in corruption.

Panel I Discussion

Symposium participants wanted the speakers to clarify their thoughts on the role of U.S. governmental agencies in democracy promotion. One radical idea put on the table was to impose a firewall between governmental and nongovernmental democracy promotion work, i.e., all support to NGOs would come from one NGO in the U.S., whereas all government-to-government support would come from USAID. With respect to the first query, panelists responded that they saw the U.S. government playing a stronger role in post-conflict and emerging democracies, while NGOs are more effective in the most repressive and restricted

countries. Importantly, both panelists agreed that government offices are crucial for providing diplomatic and political support to nongovernmental democracy promotion efforts under duress. For example, U.S. government officials can raise the issue of political prisoners each time they meet with counterparts in particular countries, in effect supporting existing NGO work in that area. On the proposal for separation of government and nongovernmental democracy promotion work, panelists were wary because they did not see how this proposal would actually be implemented.

Another question concerned potential tension between the NED's advocacy of support for democracy activists around the world in discreet and transparent ways, whereas NDI seeks greater linkage between democracy and development programs. The NDI panelist responded that U.S. party politics may be an explanation for this divergence in aims: the Democratic Party in the U.S., which controls the NDI's board, has sought to separate the democracy promotion efforts of NDI from perceptions of democracy promotion under the Bush administration, hence the recent emphasis on linking democracy to development.

Discussion also turned to the U.S. Department of State's F-process, which presents the government's overall assistance framework. The NED panelist asserted that the F-process is overly complex. Furthermore, some groups are concerned that certain "restricted" countries, such as Russia and Burma, are not receiving enough attention within the F-process framework. This creates some basis for a division of labor between government and NGO democracy promotion work: as mentioned above, NGOs may be better equipped to pursue projects in countries labeled "restricted". With respect to the restricted regime of the People's Republic of China, an audience member also asked about the position of NED and NDI on democracy promotion in China. The NED panelist responded that NED's work currently comprises partnerships with exiled organizations and support for groups using the Internet to promote democratic change.

There was also support among panelists for an idea expressed by one participant that democratic development varies on a country-by-country basis. This bolsters the case for assisting grassroots civil society developments in various countries. Another audience member applauded recent NED grant programs which offer small grants (in the neighborhood of US\$10-15,000) to indigenous groups and small organizations.

PANEL II: NEW EFFORTS TO PROMOTE DEMOCRACY – ASIA

Panelists presented on their wide-ranging efforts to promote democratic development in Asia and the Pacific: the multi-pronged work of Taiwanese organizations to build democratic awareness both nationally and abroad; the region-focused efforts of the Center for Democratic Institutions in Australia; and the Japan International Volunteer Center's difficult work of humanitarian aid to conflict areas. Discussion following the panel focused on issues of organization and structure.

Taiwan Foundation for Democracy (<http://www.tfd.org.tw/english/index.html>)

Established in 2003, TFD emerged in part due to efforts by NED to convince the Taiwanese government of the importance of a national foundation for democracy promotion. As the first democracy assistance foundation in Asia, TFD is 100 percent publicly funded and has the primary aim of deepening and consolidating Taiwan's democracy. Beyond this national objective, TFD also promotes human rights and democracy in Asia.

Organization and budget. With a 15-member Board of Trustees that convenes twice each year, TFD also has a five-member Board of Supervisors responsible for budgetary matters. By consensus among the four leading political parties of Taiwan, the TFD's chairman is the speaker of the Legislative Yuan, the vice-chairman is the Foreign Minister, and president handles daily affairs. The organization's budget is slightly under US\$1 million, though rapid expansion of the TFD's project portfolio is putting upward pressure on this figure.

Activities. TFD provides grant monies to domestic and international NGOs, think tanks, and research centers within academic institutions in order to promote human rights and democracy-building. Specific activities include conferences such as a recent conference convening 13 city representatives to discuss human rights in urban centers. Funds have also been allocated to PhD, post-doctoral, and international visitor fellowships as well as grants to the four major political parties of Taiwan. TFD conducts in-house research and publishes the *Taiwan Democracy Quarterly* and *Taiwan Journal of Democracy*.

Other projects include: 1) creation of the Initiative and Referendum Institute-Asia (IRI-Asia), which studies direct democracy and has partnered with IRI-US and IRI-Europe, 2) conferring the annual Asia Democracy and Human Rights Award, a US\$100,000 award to an individual or organization that has contributed significantly to the promotion of human rights and democracy in Asia, 3) establishment of the World Forum for Democratization in Asia (WFDA),

a platform for democracy promotion in the most undemocratic countries of Asia, and 4) initiation of the Taiwan Youth for Democracy in Asia (TYDA), a project encouraging youth involvement in democracy building both locally and globally.

Recommendations and lessons learned:

1. Though TFD is wholly supported by public funds, it is seeking private sources of funding. This is a challenge due to limited private sector resources in a democracy as young as Taiwan;
2. The breadth of the TFD's activities portfolio illustrates the vitality and creativity of democracy promotion efforts in young Asian democracies.

Taiwan Mainland Affairs Council: Assessing and Promoting Democracy in China

Mainland Affairs Council (MAC) is an organization of the Taiwanese government (<http://www.mac.gov.tw/english/index1-e.htm>). The Taiwanese government is cautious toward democracy promotion in China due to the sensitivity of cross-strait relations, but MAC has devoted some resources in the past to indirect support of various activities. The MAC's project portfolio includes 1) media-based work such as attempts to penetrate China's great Internet firewall and dissemination of news through shortwave radio broadcasts, 2) sponsorship of professional exchanges between the mainland and Taiwan, for example a recent exchange of legal professionals and election observers, 3) assistance to Taiwanese NGOs that train Chinese government-sponsored NGOs, and 4) support to mainland Chinese dissidents living abroad.

More broadly, it is crucial that efforts to promote democracy in Asia also target China, since half of the 2.5 billion individuals in the world living in "not free" conditions (according to Freedom House scores) live in China. There are reasons to be both optimistic and pessimistic with respect to democratic breakthrough in the PRC. With this in mind, below is a brief overview of various trends in mainland China today.

Social trends. Market reforms since 1979 and limited political and social liberalization during the same span of time are grounds for some cautious optimism. Citizens can now demand greater transparency in policymaking and a freer media regularly uncovers incidents of government malfeasance. However, the detention of dissenting journalists in China still exceeds the total number of journalists jailed in the rest of the world.

There has been an expansion of civil society in China: estimates place the number of non-registered social groups operating locally at 1.8 million. This compares with 135,000 officially

registered, government-controlled NGOs. Surveys estimate that 28 percent of the population is involved in at least one social organization. Beyond participation in social organizations, citizen protests are on the rise: from fewer than 9,000 in the early 1990s to more than 96,000 today, according to official police records.

Yet social control remains tight, and authorities have marshaled the military to contain popular, and sometimes violent, demands for democracy. The party also manipulates nationalist sentiments to retain control. The Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) emphasis on "stability above all else" facilitates state suppression of legitimate democratic demands. Overall, social control retained by the regime has, on the whole, stunted the growth of a robust civil society.

Political and legal reform. Within the ruling CCP, there has been emphasis on rule of law and introduction of intra-party elections. Proto-democratic groups have new momentum as a result of greater CCP support for constitutionalism. The legal industry is also growing, evident in the increasing number of litigations against the government, number of law firms, and number of qualified lawyers. Universal village elections and more limited township elections have been held since the late 1980s. However, these elections rarely include serious non-CCP challengers and the party retains control over candidate nominations.

A growing middle class and economic change. Economically, China's per capita GDP reached US\$4,500 (in Purchasing Power Parity dollars), pushing China into the "democratic transition zone" identified by Przeworski et al. Furthermore, there is a growing Chinese middle class, a key social group in one theory of democratic transition, and some measures place the middle class at 10 to 15 percent of the population. Business leaders have also organized lobby groups and the CCP is expanding its ranks to include private entrepreneurs. At present, the private sector accounts for more than 50 percent of China's GDP.

Control of the Internet. Technology is an important conduit for democratic change. New ideas have spread through new communication technologies, particularly the Internet; access to the Internet is increasing significantly in China. Government censorship remains a problem. One study found that the party has blocked 190,000 politically sensitive Internet sites, but this number is only a fraction (estimated at 8 percent) of all potentially subversive sites.

Recommendations for external efforts to promote democracy in China:

1. Recognize limitations and do not underestimate the CCP's capacity for repression and controlling information;

2. Focus on demonstrating the superior performance of democracies versus autocracies along various metrics;
3. Develop the infrastructure of democracy, including promotion of democratic norms in practice and strengthening of existing democratic institutions in China;
4. Tailor democracy promotion programs to the conditions of specific regions of China, since different regions have different needs depending on level of economic development, cultural norms, etc.

Centre for Democratic Institutions, Australia (<http://www.cdi.anu.edu.au/>)

Based at the Australian National University (ANU) in Canberra, CDI was established the same year, 1998, when Suharto was forced to step down in Indonesia. The Indonesian, South African, and Soviet transitions to democracy all provided the international context for Australian decision makers to set up a democracy promotion organization. CDI was an initiative of the Australian foreign minister and has an annual budget of approximately US\$1 million. Its mission is to strengthen democracy in the region and work with both governments and civil society groups.

Organization and present mandate. A contract exists between the Australian government and ANU to host CDI, and this contract stipulates a set of target countries for the CDI's programming: Indonesia, East Timor, Papua New Guinea, Fiji and the Solomon Islands, all of which are fledgling, fragile democracies surrounding Australia. The CDI's organizational mandate is to focus on:

- 1) strengthening parliamentary government and
- 2) working directly with and strengthening political parties.

In order to realize these goals, CDI has organized research and networking forums, exchanges, and intensive workshops.

Challenges. CDI faces several challenges with respect to democracy promotion in the region:

- The CDI's target countries all have uncertain records with democracy. For example, Papua New Guinea has experienced over 40 years of democracy, but the average citizen is poorer now than 40 years ago. This is the same situation in the Solomon Islands.
- Expectations surrounding democracy have become so inflated that failure to meet them has led to democratic backlash in some places.

- In many of the target countries, CDI is the only major democracy promotion organization. In general, there are not many other democracy promotion actors working in this region, partly because of the strategic irrelevance of the Pacific Islands. However, this is a concern because China is increasingly influential in the Pacific.
- There is also great diversity within the target countries. For example, political parties are organized around religion and culture in Indonesia, whereas in other island groups, personality drives party politics.

Activities. CDI has organized workshops on party discipline and policy formulation to address the weakness of political parties in target countries. Furthermore, it convenes an annual forum where officials and politicians from young democracies consult with Australian officials and experts. There is also an annual training course for senior parliamentary officials – not politicians – to build administrative and managerial skills.

Recommendations and lessons learned:

1. CDI works constantly on building relationships with home government, i.e., Australian politicians;
2. Programs are demand- rather than supply-driven;
3. It is important to be rigorous in selection procedures for training programs and ensure that participants are serious about gaining skills rather than taking a vacation;
4. Maintaining a distance from the foreign aid bureaucracy has been advantageous in terms of avoiding over-bureaucratization of the CDI's activities.

Japan International Volunteer Center (<http://www.ngo-jvc.net/en/>)

JVC is an international NGO engaged in community development, peace promotion, and emergency relief in Asia and Africa. Accordingly, one focus of JVC is humanitarian assistance following natural disasters and war. Past sites have included Cambodia, Somalia, and Ethiopia.

Working principles. One of the principles underlying JVC's work is alleviation of the far-reaching cultural, psychological, and physical destruction wrought by manmade and natural disasters. A second principle concerns the need to overturn the cultures of violence and impunity extending from the central government to individual citizens in conflict areas. Third, JVC believes in the importance of local support for its international projects. Outsiders, as catalysts, should not pursue direct exportation of ideas but rather local adaptation.

National aid context. The efforts of JVC can be understood in the context of Japanese overseas development assistance. Initially conceived as post-World War II compensation and a means to foster Japanese economic growth, Japanese ODA was intended as “economic growth-oriented cooperation”. Traditionally, there has been less concern for social issues and political intervention. However, organizations such as JVC are beginning to link humanitarian aid with democracy promotion through community-based and high-level government work.

Current activities. At present, JVC works with local NGOs and community groups to maintain rural livelihoods, combat the spread of HIV/AIDS, and address growing income disparities. They also work with policymakers and military leaders in host governments. Finally, they have engaged in election monitoring in Asia and Africa.

Recommendations and lessons learned:

1. Aid should be provided in two stages:
 - a) during conflict, to ensure basic human security, and
 - b) after peace accords are signed, when the focus can turn to human rights, democracy building, and good governance;
2. Cultures of violence and impunity in war-torn countries must be replaced with rule of law;
3. Cooperation with local NGOs contributes to the long term effectiveness of democracy promotion and humanitarian activities.

Panel II Discussion

Discussion focused on the relationships between the various organizations presented in the panel with their home governments and nongovernmental groups. For example, NGOs in Taiwan are reluctant to assume projects directly from the government, which prompts the government to contract with TFD and provide funds to private groups, in effect diluting linkages between the government and NGOs. Another participant asked why CDI is funded by the Australian government’s aid agency instead of parliament, and the panelist responded that this was a structural maneuver to place CDI under the watchful eye of a more dubious, and hence critical, government organization.

A question was raised about the CDI panelist’s criticism of the conflation of democracy and governance: which should an organization prioritize, promoting democratic principles or improving governance? The response was to focus on democratic principles over governance, but efforts can be made to link democracy with improvements in citizens’ basic needs.

Some discussion also surrounded the techniques employed by Taiwanese organizations to circumvent firewalls erected by the Chinese government and the possibility of sharing these strategies for a more global effort to disseminate information over the Internet in closed societies. Panelists explained that the basic strategy is to use floating IP addresses, though contacts on the mainland must be informed of new IP addresses.

On prospects for democracy in China, participants and panelists added the following comments:

- 1) India's growth rate is very close to China's, despite their difference in regime type, which points to an alternative model of high growth within a relatively poor democracy;
- 2) It is important for more Chinese mainlanders to witness democracy in action in Taiwan. Accordingly, the Taiwanese government has been negotiating with the mainland government for a tourist visa program;
- 3) There is now mainland access to an online Taiwanese newspaper, which offers mainland citizens an alternative source of information.

PANEL III: NEW EFFORTS TO PROMOTE DEMOCRACY – EASTERN EUROPE

From Solidarity in Poland to Czechoslovakia's Velvet Revolution, this region presents potent models for countries on the brink of democratic transition. Panelists represented a wealth of experience with democratic deepening – from grassroots organizing to strategizing in President Havel's office – in three post-transition democracies. Discussion focused on organizational scope and the role of the EU.

Education for Democracy Foundation, Poland

(http://www.edudemo.org.pl/pl1/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=14&Itemid=40&lang=en)

EDF is an illustration of efforts to bring democracy promotion to the national level through local, grassroots projects. Through an international network of partners and funders, such as NED and American Teachers Association, this organization promotes democratic development from Central and Eastern Europe to the western border of China. Its portfolio includes 150 cross-border grants, which support cooperation between Polish NGOs and partners

in the region, international workshops, and youth and professional study tours. Its annual budget is US\$3 million, and the Polish government contribution to this budget has become increasingly important.

Regional challenges. Compared to younger democracies, where authoritarian regimes deprived citizens of basic rights until recent decades, the democratic ideals of the French Revolution have been embedded in the culture of Europe for centuries. Even in Eastern Europe, citizens are familiar with long lists of human rights. However, this panelist contended, individuals in post-Cold War Eastern Europe suffer from “democratic malaise”. To redress this, EDF seeks projects introducing citizens to situations linking democratic ideas to concrete outcomes.

Activities. EDF prioritizes cooperation at the local, community level. Accordingly, it manages small competitive grants programs, school exchanges, and international school partnerships. One example of a best practice can be found in Tajikistan, where women’s clubs create projects based on local needs (e.g., purchasing livestock for collective management, collecting school supplies for children to attend school). These clubs are also avenues for women to engage in democratic decision-making and make an economic contribution to their households. In short, such community-level projects place citizens in direct, daily contact with democratic practices and outcomes.

Under the banner of the Abroad (*Zagranica*) Group, there is a movement among Polish NGOs to cooperate and pursue projects with an international reach. *Zagranica* members focus on the integration of democracy and development assistance, building on the earlier “fraternal assistance” extended by Polish NGOs to political organizers during the Prague Spring of 1968.

Recommendations and lessons learned:

1. Schools are important sites for initiating democratic strengthening activities, as illustrated by the integration of Muslims and Russians in the Stary Krym community;
2. Empowering citizens at the local level to integrate democratic processes in their daily affairs is key to democratic deepening and extends engagement with democratic principles beyond “mere talk”;
3. Democratic development must build on local traditions, not simple importation of institutions from abroad;
4. An indirect approach can be particularly effective in situations where tensions are high, for example, building inter-group trust through cooperation on seemingly “unimportant” issues.

Pontis Foundation, Slovakia (<http://www.nadaciapontis.sk/en/>)

Established in 1997, Pontis (Latin for “bridges”) Foundation initiated projects abroad in 2000. This organization focuses on three core program areas:

1. Strengthening domestic NGOs through activities such as training programs;
2. Working with large corporations on building corporate and social responsibility;
3. Promoting democracy abroad in countries as diverse as Belarus, Cuba, Serbia, and Iraq, though Pontis’ comparative advantage is in smaller countries.

Strategy. The national experience with democratic transition in 1989 and the 1990s serves as the basis for the organization’s expertise and inspiration. Rather than recycle programs in recipient countries, Pontis attempts to identify key development trends and tailor projects and partnerships to those trends. Unlike Poland’s EDF, Pontis provides input at the policy level and works closely with the Slovakian Foreign Ministry. In Cuba, for example, Pontis uses the Slovakian embassy to provide Cuban citizens with Internet access and as a conduit for sending reading materials into the country.

Funding. Core funding comes from NED, but funding has diversified to include monies from a national aid program and the EU. However, EU grant programs require more logical justification and quantitative measures of success, none of which may actually be relevant to outcomes on the ground; U.S. funders, in contrast, rely more on trust and an organization’s proven track record. Key to the funding process is identifying and working with sound local partners, which in turn demands vigilant communication and monitoring of the relationship.

Activities. In Belarus, Pontis has shifted to supporting research and providing incentives for young, talented Belarusian professionals and scholars to remain in their country. Cuba is the flagship case of Pontis’ domestic advocacy work: they have sought to send politicians of the Slovak ruling party to Cuba and show them that members of their political family are imprisoned in Cuba. Throughout Serbia, Pontis has established a network of “regional champions” for training Serbian leaders and bolstering indigenous NGOs. To illustrate its ability to react to conditions on the ground, the panelist also raised the example of Pontis’ Solidarity Campaign for Belarusian Cartoonists, an international effort requiring minimal funding but coordination among regional media outlets to publish a blitz of political cartoons. This campaign expressed indignation at the Belarusian government’s crackdown on political cartoonists and was so effective, it was extended for a second round.

Challenges. Retention of quality staff is a constant concern, and internal consolidation presents one coping strategy. Similar to the Czech experience (described below), the current Slovak government is rather cool toward democracy promotion efforts.

Recommendations and lessons learned:

1. Initially, Pontis developed expertise in elections monitoring and voter mobilization, but during the organization's 5-year anniversary strategic planning process, organizers determined that new objectives should include longer-term projects in civil society development, education of young leaders, and policy advocacy;
2. Regarding the state of democracy promotion in Eastern Europe, it is still a relatively small field (with the notable exception of Poland). Organizations in the region possess limited resources and experience, which translates to a limited scope of activity;
3. There has been a shift toward linking democracy promotion with development agendas, and this entails long-term, strategic engagement with donors in the US.

Association for International Affairs, Czech Republic (http://www.amo.cz/en/about_us/amo/)

AIA is the biggest and most influential Czech foreign policy think tank. It is nongovernmental, nonpartisan, and privately funded. One of the priorities is to encourage Czech government officials and politicians to broaden activities in the field of democracy assistance.

Activities. Given its deep intellectual resources, AIA is focusing on engaging politicians, publishing policy papers, organizing roundtables and conferences, and arranging parliamentarians and governmental officials visits to authoritarian countries and fragile democracies. For example, visits to Belarus of three members of current government including Deputy Prime minister were arranged by AIA prior to their appointment. Internationally, AIA is working with various independent initiatives, NGOs and think tanks in Eastern Europe, mainly Belarus and Ukraine. It has also organized internships for young experts from abroad to work with Czech practitioners in order to facilitate cross-border understanding of the logic of the 1990s transition to democracy across different issue areas.

In those activities AIA strives to cooperate and coordinate with Polish and Slovak NGOs and to follow the example of cooperation of Polish, Czech, and Slovak dissidents. That was unique in the Soviet bloc as during the Cold War they united across these countries on various initiatives and smuggled books as well as NED-funded printing presses across borders. More recently, this unity has fallen apart and respective governments are not continuing this legacy, although there are some promising initiatives as for example International Visegrad Fund

supporting joint projects of Central European and Ukrainian, Belarusian and Moldovan NGOs and providing scholarships for students from those countries to study in Central Europe (IVF is financed by governments of Czech, Hungary, Slovakia and Poland).

Challenges. As Vaclav Havel as well as other former dissidents left the governmental and parliamentary posts there is a danger that democracy assistance and promotion will be significantly lowered or diminish from Czech Foreign Policy Agenda. For instance, the current president significantly relegated democracy promotion to a lower priority on his presidential agenda.

Although European Union officially declares support for democracy and human rights as its priority, European system is ineffective, over-bureaucratized, and unable to reach grassroots activists and initiatives in undemocratic regimes. Most of the allocated resources are still spent for government-controlled projects (both in development cooperation and democracy and human rights related projects).

Recommendations and lessons learned:

1. The success of work in closed societies in Eastern Europe depends on detailed knowledge of situation on the ground and reliable trustworthy local partners which should have maximum ownership;
2. The experience of Central European and Baltic countries with transition to democracy and transformation process is unique and should be even more utilized in trilateral projects;
3. There is urgent need for more in-country and intra-regional networking and coalition building;
4. More interaction is needed between NGOs, Government, and academia as well as between US and Europe.

Panel III Discussion

Participants asked a series of questions regarding democratic deepening in the region. First, how do Eastern European democracy activists weigh the balance between promoting democracy at home versus abroad, keeping in mind sustainability issues? Second, is it possible to imagine a time when one or more efforts in the region can result in the creation of a NED-like organization? Third, what are some ways to start talking about democratic reversals in the region, such as recent events in Hungary? Are reversals reported to the EU, for example?

Panelists responded that resources are the constraining factor for international work, not practical experience with democracy in the region. On the question of a country or regional NED-like organization, the response was mixed. On the one hand, such an organization would be commensurate with the maturity of the region's democracy promotion sector; on the other hand, there is a lack of political support in some countries.

Nonetheless, one participant pointed out the importance of the region due to the various models of democratic transition it provides to activists in undemocratic places. "The specter of the Velvet Revolution is very powerful," he asserted, and called for the group to consider ways to build relationships with activists in closed regimes, although such initiatives must be approached with caution and discretion.

Another set of queries from symposium participants concerned the role of the EU in democracy promotion. One participant asked whether the EU model of democratization is tenable without economic incentives. Another asked which EU body provides aid to democracy promotion organizations. Regarding democratization without the carrot of EU membership, panelists responded that democracy-building in the broader "EU neighborhood" has been less successful due to lack of accountability and commitment measures. Panelists also indicated that they work with the EU Commission, which is a more flexible body but still highly bureaucratic.

One idea put on the table by a participant, with support from panelists, was organization of a region-wide series of events to commemorate the death of Russian journalist Anna Politkovskaya on October 7th. Former president Havel, for example, will be holding a conference and there are events planned across Russia.

PANEL IV: NEW EFFORTS TO PROMOTE DEMOCRACY – AFRICA

There are exciting, continent-wide initiatives underway in Africa, and panelists discussed the strategic thinking and practical initiatives buttressing their organizations' work. Discussion focused on the most promising growth areas in African democratic development.

Institute for Democracy in South Africa (<http://www.idasa.org.za/>)

IDASA's mission is to promote "sustainable democracy based on active citizenship, democratic institutions, and social justice." This summer, IDASA will convene its 20th annual strategic planning meeting and review the core mission of the organization. Following the

organizational audit that will take place at this meeting, IDASA will issue an amended Strategic Review document to provide direction for subsequent project development.

Core competencies. IDASA identified research and analysis, training, public education, network building, political organization, monitoring, and information dissemination as its areas of expertise. Building on these capabilities, the organization has developed program groups in the following issue areas: economic governance, community and citizen empowerment, migration policy, governance and HIV/AIDS prevention, and policy reform.

Activities. Consistent with the core competencies identified above and the structural organization of program groups, the projects of IDASA always tap into at least one of these organizational strengths. New activities include a variety of educational courses which IDASA hopes to develop into a more unified School for Democracy.

Challenges. Funders sometimes demand project completion cycles much briefer than ideal for realizing project goals. Nonetheless, IDASA has maintained a diverse portfolio of funders and financial partners. Developing an organization with a continental scope is also difficult; this is evident in efforts to hire locally and build offices managed by locals in places where skilled human resources are in high demand.

Recommendations and lessons learned:

1. IDASA has identified a cycle for addressing democratic deficits:
 - a) problem identification
 - b) accumulation of social pressure to address the identified problem
 - c) identification of options
 - d) simultaneous social action and pressure on policy channels
 - e) drafting of legislation and organization of petitions
 - f) monitoring of policy implementation
 - g) identification of new problems and gaps;
2. While the organization's projects comprise all African countries, it continues to work on deepening and strengthening South African democracy.

Media Foundation for West Africa, Ghana (<http://www.mfwaonline.org/en/>)

Founded in 1997, this organization advocates for press freedom throughout Africa. Without press freedom, democracy can be stillborn or extremely flawed. Journalists are also a critical part of the transition process: in the 1980s, individuals in the media spearheaded the

pressure for democratization. At present, the political topography of Africa can be broken down according to variation in government repression of journalists:

1. Countries where there are functioning, open, unencumbered parliamentary systems of government with appreciable rule of law and respect for human rights. In these places, journalists are not hounded or otherwise harassed;
2. Countries where the ruling party or government obstructs multiparty participation, disrespects the rule of law and human rights. This is the largest category of countries, and in these places, journalists face death threats and state harassment;
3. Countries where governments absolutely reject the right of participation of other groups in governance and the rule of law, where organized political participation is tantamount to inviting a death sentence; in these places, there is no harassment of journalists because individuals were silenced long ago.

Activities. MFWA identifies abuses and violations of press freedom through monitors in 16 West African countries. Advocacy tools include petitions, campaigns, and general promotion of a culture of protest. MFWA also engages in legal defense of journalists and has developed a network of lawyers. Pressure for legal reform is also a prong of this strategy. Training programs are rarer, but they have been organized with respect to a particular democratic issue, such as elections. They do organize an annual training program for human rights advocates in West and Central Africa, selecting 12 individuals a year from over 300 applications. They are also pressing the Africa Commission and African Union to adopt a declaration of freedom of expression, which would then enable organizations such as MFWA to hold governments accountable in courts for violations of press freedoms. With European funding, a project in the pipeline is creation of a media credit scheme to bring capital to nascent media projects.

Coalitions. MFWA has been at the forefront of an international network, formed in 2000, that partners with local media in conflict countries such as Somalia. This network includes a slew of organizations such as Media Support and UNESCO/UN Humanitarian Assistance. Another successful coalition has been the Network of African Freedom of Expression Organizations, which is addressing African Union institution building.

Challenges. Human resources are stretched thin, and procuring long-term funding is a constant headache. One implication of these problems is inability to consolidate programs in

particular places. MFWA's project portfolio is also too demanding and there is some need to strategize and develop priorities.

Recommendations and lessons learned:

1. Democratic institutions must be used and tested to strengthen them, for example using the court systems in various countries to defend journalists accused by host governments;
2. While monitoring of press freedoms is common work across all 16 countries where MFWA is active, other projects such as legal defense are dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

Panel IV Discussion

One participant asked about development of press freedoms in new media such as the Internet or even more established media such as radio. The panelist responded that independent radio broadcasting is booming, particularly in closed places such as Somalia. At present, MFWA is working on legislation on broadcasts and creating public service radio broadcasting modeled on the BBC. Internet is an important information source in North Africa, where traditional media are still highly repressed, and again the focus of MFWA work is on Internet legislation.

Participants also asked about funding – from the EU, from home governments – and how that impacted organizational decisions. Panelists responded that EU funding can, in some cases, swamp out indigenous efforts because EU awards can be enormous in size. Some receiving governments may end up dedicating more resources to EU relations than to deepening democratic practices toward their own citizens. There was also sharp criticism of development aid, which one panelist saw as a major source of loot for African governments.

Other questions concerned democracy efforts in Zimbabwe, and the IDASA panelist responded that a pro-democracy coalition is holding together there, with meetings planned in the near future. The MFWA panelist noted that there is a very courageous group of dissidents on the ground in Zimbabwe, and they possess the means to leverage external support.

PANEL V: STARTING NEW DEMOCRACY FOUNDATIONS

In order to gain a sense of new initiatives underway in different countries, this panel comprised experts on democracy promotion efforts in each of the geographical regions discussed during the previous day's panels. By way of introducing the panel, the moderator mentioned the

difficulty that Western European governments are encountering in their efforts to create a continent-wide democracy foundation. During discussion following the panel, participants considered the importance of multilateral democracy efforts and the possibility of a global democracy foundation.

Canada

An exciting initiative is taking place under the Conservative leadership of Prime Minister Stephen Harper. Democracy assistance, including human rights work, has gained momentum as the platform for Canadian foreign policy. There is support within the legislature to create a Democracy Canada Institute, modeled structurally on the Dutch multi-party democracy promotion institute and NED in its focus on grant making. The initiative has the support of the ministry of foreign affairs and has entailed a 10-year advocacy campaign to the prime minister's office, members and speakers of parliament, and democracy activists. At present, parliament is debating the creation of Democracy Canada. Lobbying efforts are now directed at politicians.

Challenges. There is some concern that democracy promotion carries a negative connotation due to current international affairs, particularly the Iraq War. Because of this, there has been an effort for Democracy Canada supporters to convene conferences and other forums for discussing the European roots of democracy and, in effect, separating it from American efforts. There have also been efforts to initiate conversations about shared challenges, lessons learned, necessary organizational tools for successful democracy promotion, and Canadian organizational strengths. Second, there has been effort to position democracy promotion within the other facets of Canadian foreign policy. Democracy Canada advocates have sought to assuage human security experts that democracy promotion will not "crowd out" humanitarian assistance programs. Supporters also understand that democracy promotion is perceived by many development aid policymakers as a subset of development aid.

There is a debate on the structure of Democracy Canada vis-à-vis other organizations: some believe that Democracy Canada should be an umbrella organization with significant funding (40 million Canadian dollars or more) and possess oversight responsibility. This concerns many Canadian NGOs, and an alternative to the umbrella foundation model is a series of institutes with particular specializations.

Historical context. The creation of Democracy Canada would be the culmination of an evolving national democracy promotion agenda. Beginning in 1988, Canadian policymakers debated the merits of creating an NED-like organization in Canada. Efforts resulted in the creation of an International Center for Human Rights and Democratic Development (now Rights and Democracy, <http://www.ichrdd.ca/site/>). This Center was to receive a budget appropriation from the Canadian Parliament, but there were two major obstacles from the outset: 1) the organization was headquartered in Montreal, not the national capital, and it gained an identity as an “outsider organization”, disconnected from the policy decisions being made in Ottawa; and 2) Rights and Democracy leaders maintained a domestic agenda, which led to political tensions when the organization criticized some of the Canadian government’s policies.

As Rights and Democracy became increasingly marginalized on the national scene, Canadian democracy promotion efforts moved toward greater multilateralism. For example, Canadians were active in the management of UNDP and World Bank and other multilateral organizations. Under a Liberal government and foreign minister Axworthy (1996-2000), there was again a clear preference for democracy promotion through multilateral efforts. Canadian competence was concentrated in the following issue areas: elections, political party development, parliamentary strengthening, and minority rights and federalism. Under this Liberal government, democracy promotion became a platform for a more robust Canadian foreign policy.

Recommendations and lessons learned:

1. In generating advice for new directions in Canadian democracy assistance, policymakers have identified a set of principles that should guide democracy promotion (authored by Gordon Crawford):
 - a) democracy assistance programs should be locally owned and authored;
 - b) involvement of foreigners should focus on assisting democratic dialogue itself, and on promoting the broadest possible participation of citizens;
 - c) there should be an emphasis on the legitimacy of the actions and intentions of external actors;
 - d) efforts should be multi-partisan; and
 - e) there should be an emphasis on the long-term commitment of Canadian democracy assistance programs in host countries.
2. Issues requiring ongoing conversations with relevant groups include: determining the identity of a national democracy foundation, the placement of democracy promotion efforts within the national foreign policy agenda, and the placement of new democracy promotion organizations within the constellation of existing government agencies and NGOs.

Japan

Democracy promotion in Japan is concentrated at the level of democracy-promoting foundations, giving the government an indirect role in democratic assistance programs. Government ministries have many affiliate foundations, with a flow of funding between these, but a recent bid-rigging scandal has alerted the public to corruption in these ministry-foundation relationships.

In terms of linkage between democracy promotion and Japanese foreign policy, since 1996 there have been official speeches by Ministry of Foreign Affairs representatives that Japan is engaged in a “Partnership for Democratic Development”, consistent with the foreign policy objective of creating an “arc of freedom and prosperity” in the region.

Japanese efforts have focused on East Asia, the Middle East, and Central and Eastern Europe. Activities include support for free and fair elections, peace building and conflict prevention, creating systems of checks and balances within governments, empowering civil society, and linking democratic development with the improvement of socioeconomic conditions. There has also been a move to link democracy promotion with human rights work. For example, meetings between human rights NGOs and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs since 1996 have sought to prevent human rights abuses in Cambodia. Japanese efforts are also multilateral, and the government has cooperated with the EU, NATO, U.S., Canada, and Australia.

Challenges. There is a shortage of Japanese human resources with the requisite expertise to engage in broad democracy promotion efforts. Furthermore, the government itself does not have clear ideas regarding its principles of democracy promotion. There are some active groups, both in and outside of government, but politicians by and large are consumed with election campaigning and domestic policy. Political leaders are biased toward economic development and stability for trade and business rather than the political work of democracy promotion.

Recommendations and lessons learned:

1. The Japanese government maintains an indirect, supporting role in global democracy promotion efforts, with a focus on linking democratic development to economic cooperation and social development;
2. Possibilities for strengthening democracy promotion efforts in Japan include: creation of foundations under parliament, longer-term election monitoring, longer-term commitment of practitioners to host countries, greater consultation with jurists, academics, journalists,

and NGOs in aid policy, and greater cooperation with human rights groups in foreign countries.

India

Democratic development in India begins at the local level, with the strengthening of institutions of self-government. This is consistent with Gandhi's insight that "a village is a republic." This process of grassroots development has culminated in the 1993 amendments to the Indian Constitution that created a three-tier system of elected councils in rural and urban areas, including reserved seats for minorities and women.

One organization that embodies this commitment to local democratic deepening is the Global Network on Local Governance (GNLG, <http://www.gnlg.org/>). This consortium of individuals and groups seeks to place democratic change and development in the context of globalization and contribute to the global spread of democracy: meetings are held in locations around the world, and delegates share experiences and best practices from their home countries with foreign counterparts. From the GNLG's founding meeting in 2001 to the first steering committee meeting at New Delhi's Institute of Social Sciences in 2006, participants and leaders have established core activities to support GNLG's role as a communication bridge for groups concerned with the maintenance of robust, grassroots democracy.

Periodic newsletters, an Internet presence, and future meetings all address the network's aim. The core principle of GNLG is to "uphold and support participatory and decentralized governance." Other activities on the horizon include local assemblies, elections studies and monitoring projects, and research on local governance. Also on the horizon is creation of an India, Brazil, and South Africa Local Government Forum (IBSA-LGF) where leaders of cities and government ministries will create a ministry-level forum for exchange of ideas and strengthening of local governance in these vibrant democracies.

Recommendations and lessons learned:

1. Promoting democratic practices at the grassroots level is a core aspect of national and global democratic development, and this focus on the local can be taken to an international scale;
2. Cross-border communication regarding best practices in local democratic governance can and should be encouraged through organizations, such as GNLG, which focus on networking.

Czech Republic

While efforts to create a national democracy foundation in the Czech Republic are not as developed as those in Canada, there is a small Transformation Cooperation Unit (TCU, www.mfa.cz/transformation) within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Established in 2004, the primary goal of this office is to support democracy assistance to 10 priority countries undergoing political transitions: Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova (including Transnistria), Georgia, Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cuba, Burma, and Iraq.

Activities. Primarily focused on grants to Czech NGOs, universities, and churches for cooperation with both officially and unofficially or illegally working NGOs and various initiatives working in target countries, TCU does not directly support organizations outside the country. It has an activities budget of approximately US\$1.7 million and has a portfolio of 27 projects this year, the majority of which are in Belarus (9 projects). Activities include: undergraduate and graduate student scholarships to Czech universities, funding to independent European Radio for Belarus, core funding to NGOs and dissident groups to promote civil society development, and study visits and internships for local officials.

Challenges. Czech politicians are, for the most part, not interested in democracy promotion efforts. Multi-party democracy promotion foundation based on the German model may become too politicized if established. Democracy promotion assistance is also not particularly popular within government officials as often seen endangering Czech economic interest in target countries. Furthermore, TCU could become too bureaucratic if subordinated to a development cooperation, department or agency, which is even larger concern than the lack of political and government interest described previously.

Recommendations and lessons learned:

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Even without strong support from politicians and government agencies, broad democratic promotion efforts are possible through small offices with slim budgets if there are strong NGOs interested in the issue inside the country. |
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Discussion Panel V

Discussion centered on the possibility of creating a global democracy foundation, on par with institutions such as the World Bank and World Trade Organization, but with the express purpose of supporting democratic developments around the world. One panelist noted that the

International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA, <http://www.idea.int/>) has developed a set of principles that may be part of the foundation of such a global organization. Another panelist asked, “Would people want to go to more meetings?” Participants also debated whether the UN Democracy Fund (UNDF) might be one model, but some rejected this because non-democracies are members of the UN. Others noted that countries receiving funds from UNDF are already democracies, or, in the case of Russia, the government may set up false NGOs to obtain the UNDF’s grants. Another participant asked the India representative whether the strong Indian support for UNDF is likely to continue in the future, and the response was affirmative. Even if there is no clear movement to create such an international democracy foundation, multilateral efforts are gaining support in Canada and India.

One participant also reflected on whether democracy-building can be a component of all development projects, similar to the way the Canadian government mandates consideration of environmental impact in all projects. A Canadian panelist responded that a democracy component was added to all USAID-funded projects in Egypt and Jordan, but after ten years of tracking these projects, he saw no significant increase in democratic practices in either country. He expressed the opinion that democratizing development may be one important means to deliver development projects, but democracy has a broader concern, i.e., the distribution of authority more generally, and this must be addressed directly.

PANEL VI: WHAT KIND OF ASSISTANCE DO NEW AND STRUGGLING DEMOCRACIES NEED?

This panel featured one panelist, a former leader of a Latin American country, who shared his thoughts on embedding democratic development within efforts to bolster the political, economic and social development of a country. He asserted, “Democracy is not just an abstract concept. For democracy to take root, we must have strong political parties and strong democratic institutions. For democracy to take root, we need to respect the independence of these institutions and respect human rights, freedom of the press. Leaders and governments need to be accountable for the decisions they make.” Beyond these overlapping and reinforcing aspects of democracy, he pointed out that democratic development entails promoting three types of democracy: economic democracy, political democracy, and social democracy. Political liberalization without accompanying development in a broad array of social and economic issue

areas may lead to citizen disenchantment. To combat this potential backlash, leaders and activists must focus on development along multiple fronts.

Given this linkage between political and economic development, he noted the concentration of poverty and socioeconomic inequality in Latin America. Because of this inequality, an increasing number of Latin Americans have expressed a preference for authoritarian government in recent surveys, conditional on an authoritarian government providing them with basic needs and employment. Economic redistribution programs are thus an integral part of democracy promotion, with democratic practices built into the fabric of economic assistance programs. He cited a program initiated in rural Peru where communities identified women in their midst who should receive subsidies from the government. Yet, program implementation may also lead to unanticipated outcomes. For example, this rural subsidy program had to be supplemented by a cooperative arrangement with doctors to issue birth certificates to the poorest, neediest women, many of whom lacked official identification.

Recommendations and lessons learned:

1. We must strengthen the network of organizations that are working on democracy promotion;
2. We must give content to political democracy;
3. We need a specific social agenda for democracy promotion in the world;
4. We need to identify specific practices – such as job generation for poor people and women, micro-projects that are congruent with local environments, micro-credit programs, market identification – and link economic development with democratic practices.

Discussion Panel VI

Two symposium participants inquired about the challenges in maintaining political support for poverty alleviation and democracy promotion programs. One participant considered the U.S. experience with poverty alleviation, particularly President Lyndon B. Johnson's War on Poverty and subsequent backlash in the form of neoconservatism. He asked the panelist how it is possible for government leaders in Latin America or anywhere in the world to provide results beyond good intentions. The panelist noted that there is no easy answer to this, though many Latin American leaders are currently meeting to begin a conversation on this very issue. On the general question of maintaining domestic political support during political and economic reforms, the panelist reflected that it was necessary to maintain a longer time horizon with respect to

poverty alleviation programs. First, leaders should seek stabilization of the economy, then initiation of redistribution programs. Continuity across different administrations was also crucial for ensuring stable economic development. Furthermore, popular political support could be maintained by strengthening media freedoms and the court system in order to curb corruption among government officials.

There was also a discussion of the role of international trade on poverty alleviation, and whether free trade agreements could fit into the prescription to imbue political democracy with more economic and social content. The panelist responded that free trade should be supported insofar as it creates jobs among those who would otherwise remain mired in poverty and so long as it opens up markets abroad for goods produced in poorer countries.

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION: HOW TO MEASURE SUCCESS?

To set up the discussion, two scholars described new research initiatives for evaluating the effect of democracy promotion programs. One approach seeks to identify, through historical process tracing, the effect of international influences (e.g., financial assistance, global media coverage) on democratic outcomes, while the second approach focuses on field experiments to identify the impact of small-scale projects on community and democratic development. The former project will use qualitative approaches and first define the outcome of interest (the dependent variable) as well as specify a theory of democratization to test. The theory will then suggest key causal variables (independent variables) and examine the effect of international-, government-, NGO-, and individual-level actors. The second research agenda comprises a set of projects, which are micro-level in approach, and seeks to test implicit hypothesis in development work using more quantitative methods. One hypothesis currently being tested in Liberia is that the more community involvement in a project, the more democratic the project outcome.

Critiques of the current state of evaluation in the field of democracy promotion include:

- There is a need to make explicit the implicit theories of democratization driving action on the ground;
- There is a need to identify realistic and reliable measures for democratic outcomes and causal factors;

- There is a bias toward emphasizing success cases among practitioners and policymakers but, among scholars, a bias toward emphasizing failed cases;
- There are not sufficient theories of democratic transition or democratic consolidation to test.

A third panelist pointed out that evaluation has its limits. This panelist admitted skepticism toward efforts to evaluate democracy promotion projects using the social science methods outlined by the scholars on the panel. In some respects, democracy promotion is an art, not a science. Furthermore, the objective of democracy promotion programs differ from those of social science, and there are contested areas of democracy promotion which defy clear measures of success (e.g., work in repressive places such as Burma and Turkmenistan). He also suggested that evaluation of the types described above may be most suitable for large-scale, multilateral projects, whereas smaller, more discreet democracy promotion cannot and should not be subject to evaluation.

Participants raised several practical barriers to inclusion of more rigorous evaluation components in their democracy promotion work:

- Adequate evaluation requires more funding and a longer project time horizon than is realistic for many projects;
- Funders want organizations to report success, so organizations must respond to these results-oriented incentives;
- Definitions for what constitutes “success” vary by case;
- Many democracy assistance projects are funded for political reasons and not because of the weight of previous evaluations;
- Democracy promotion efforts require flexibility to be effective, and hewing to strict experimental standards may lead to lost opportunities.

Recommendations:

1. Democracy promotion experts and practitioners often operate under implicit assumptions about and theories of democracy, and evaluation calls for making these explicit;
2. Evaluation is relevant for all democracy promotion projects, but a tactical move can be made to evaluate small-scale projects more rigorously;
3. It is possible to conceive of evaluation methods which include the recipients of democracy assistance through participatory assessment, though this approach cannot be used to evaluate external aid;
4. Evaluation has its limits and should be approached with humility given intractable measurement problems;

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| 5. Rigorous evaluation of projects is a means to impart legitimacy and credibility to democracy promotion efforts. |
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CLOSING COMMENTS

Democracy promotion may have reached a point where, like the development field, it is not going to retreat despite difficulties with program evaluation. It is important to know whether certain strategies are effective and, in so doing, avoid the endemic corruption plaguing much of the development industry today. The search for proximate indicators of success and failure in democracy assistance continues: the key indicator may not be Freedom House ratings, it may be more proximate measures such as how constituents rate their legislators' performance.

Yet, there are also places in the world where the goal should be, very simply, keeping hope alive. Funding democrats is an end in places that are mired in political and social repression, and for these cases, evaluation should not be a significant concern.

The organizational pluralism in democracy promotion today – evident in the presentations over the past two days – is heartening and contributes to the pluralism of ideas that is vital to the movement. What we need is better coordination and networking, and these can be done in the context of organizational diversity. In addressing that need, the purpose of this conference has been to advance our sense of community and knowledge.