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The Democracy Canada Institute: A Blueprint

Concept Paper

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"Advancing Democracy Abroad: A Proposal to Create the Democracy Canada Institute"
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Introduction

> Man is capable of justice, hence democracy is possible; but man is inclined to injustice, therefore democracy is necessary.

> *Reinhold Niebuhr*

Our daily newspapers tell the tale: hardly a day goes by without a story about failed states, like Afghanistan or Haiti, trying to build the minimal structures of a functioning society, or well-developed former authoritarian states like Iraq or Russia trying to build new civil societies of pluralism and liberty, or already strong civil societies like Taiwan or Hong Kong striving to make the jump to a sustainable democracy. State-building, civil society-building and democracy-building are three of the most important topics in the world today, and this paper is dedicated to the question of whether Canada can make a contribution to international democratic capacity building and, if so, how such a contribution would be structured.

Answering such questions is far more than an academic exercise. The federal government has announced an international policy review, and the priority afforded to democratic and governance capacity building - as opposed to poverty reduction, peace and security and the myriad of other foreign policy objectives - will be one of the big issues that a new White Paper must address. The Martin government, too, in the 2004 Speech from the Throne, announced the creation of a Canada Corps, an initiative that seeks to harness the energy and experience of Canadian experts, volunteers, and young professionals for the delivery of international assistance in areas of governance and institution building. On May 14, 2004, the Prime Minister further announced that two co-chairs, Julie Payette and Gordon Smith, would be marshalled to come up with a three to five-year agenda for the Canada Corps.

This paper argues that the proposed objectives of the Canada Corps – giving Canadian volunteers an outlet and using Canadian expertise to assist international governance – are worthy and deserving of government support. But the volunteer aspect of the initiative – the Canada Corps – should be structured to encourage youth volunteers and participation in organizations like Katimivak and Canada World Youth. The focus of the Canada Corps should be to give volunteer-deficient young people a meaningful

community experience in the transition from school to work. A healthy Canada is a Canada that volunteers. But while doing communities some good, the purpose of such an organization would be on the educative, self-transforming experience of the participants themselves. The other mandate mentioned in the initial description of the Canada Corps – transferring knowledge and skills in governance – is a professional, highly complex process. Public administration is a discipline with no easy answers.

Assisting international governance calls for a different kind of organization, and we would suggest that the government establish an independent Democracy Canada Institute, funded and reporting to Parliament, which would support existing Canadian organizations in the field and work closely with Canadian political parties to use some of their expertise in democratic development abroad. In 1970, Canada created the International Development Research Centre to assist development; in 1988, the government created the International Centre for Human Rights and Democracy Development to promote the rule of law; in 2004-05, the government should create a new institution to fund, coordinate and prioritize Canadian efforts to nurture sustainable democracies abroad.[1]

In arguing this case, four questions must be addressed:

- Why is democratic development important?
- Does Canada have particular expertise or skills sets to add to the issue?
- What is being done internationally and what can be learned comparatively?
- If Canada is to make a contribution, how should it be structured?

Democratic Development

Running as a presidential candidate in 2000, George W. Bush was extremely wary of the concept of "nation-building." But, as President, Bush has launched the most intense and ideological promotion of democracy since Woodrow Wilson. In his famous speech of November 2003, on the promotion of freedom and democracy in the Middle East, Bush proclaimed:

> Are the peoples of the Middle East somehow beyond the reach of liberty? Are millions of
> men and women and children condemned by history or culture to live in despotism? Are they
> alone never to know freedom, and never even to have a choice in the matter? I, for one, do

not believe it. I believe every person has the ability and the right to be free…Therefore, the United States has adopted a new policy, a forward strategy of freedom in the Middle East.

Bush's commitment is breathtaking, especially since the record of building sustainable democracies is so mixed. But it does demonstrate how highly our superpower neighbour views the priority of democracy-building. Yet, it is the start of wisdom to begin a venture with a realistic appraisal of its chances for success. This paper argues for an enhanced Canadian effort to aid democratic development abroad, but the capabilities and realities of the real world won't be pushed aside. The track record on building democratic systems that can be sustained after the donor or the imperial power leaves is not good. As Francis Fukuyama reminds us in *State-Building*, the "experience of the 1990's in Somalia, Haiti, Cambodia, Bosnia, Kosovo and East Timor should be very chastening."[2] The mission is vital but not easy and this must be readily acknowledged before Canada considers the creation of a new institution.

Historian Jacques Barzun, in his article *Is Democratic Theory for Export*, is skeptical that such knowledge can be transferred. Barzun's democratic theorem can be stated in a single sentence: "For a free mankind, it is best that the people should be sovereign, and this popular sovereignty implies political and social equality."[3] *Vox populi, vox dei* has always meant that rulers should not withstand the people's will. But to force leaders to account for their actions, the people need liberty and training in how to use it. This was the essential point of Edmund Burke. People change only gradually and it is the norms of culture or society that determine behaviour most of the time, not the sanctions of the state. In his *Reflections on the French Revolution*, Burke famously wrote, "To love the little platoon we belong to in society is the first principle (the germ as it were) of public affections," and by loving our families, our neighbourhoods, our churches, etc., gradually we build civic competence. Generations build on generations so that society is "a partnership not only between those who are living but between those who are dead, and those who are to be born."[4] Since it is local tradition that determines what de Tocqueville called "the habits of the heart," Barzun is sceptical about international attempts to transfer knowledge in the absence of a domestic demand for them. Institutions depend on habits long ingrained and the habits of the heart cannot easily be transported to another. Barzun concludes: "The parts of the machine are not detachable."[5]

But if Burke and conservatives like him are right, and it is the "little platoons" and, more broadly, culture that determine the "habits of the heart," and thus the success of institutions, Burke's great contemporary

Immanuel Kant makes an equally strong case for reform. In his essay *Perpetual Peace*, written five years after Burke's *Reflections on the French Revolution*, Kant made the point that institutional change can change a culture, and thus the norms that determine how things run. Republics, he theorized, are different from Monarchies and less likely to go to war, because citizens will know that it is they who will suffer. Reform can bring about different habits of the heart. Change the incentive system and you change behaviour. Burke and Barzun warn us that democracy cannot be exported holus-bolus; rather, people have to come gradually to the idea. But Kant enlightens by showing that cultures are not in stasis, they evolve, and structural changes in institutions from an absolute monarch to a civic republic can lead to more civil behaviour.

If Burke cautions us not to rush, Kant says don't give up hope. Both lessons are amply on display today. States like Taiwan, Chile and South Korea have made substantial progress in becoming full-fledged democracies within a generation. Taiwan's progress is instructive. Taiwan after 1945 was authoritarian but had a Mandarin culture that went back 5000 years. China invented the Mandarin system of bureaucracy and has a tradition of a strong state. Confucius' parable about the woman fleeing anarchy and civil war, even if she had to face tigers on the road, makes the point that security and order are the preconditions of governance.   For twenty years after Chiang Kai-shek fled the Mainland he ruled Taiwan as a dictator, but gradually elements of a civil society developed. Religion thrived, capitalism took hold and the middle class expanded. Wealth grew. Taiwan began to experiment with expanded participation in local government. Taiwan became liberal, though not democratic. Finally in the mid 1980s, the son of Chiang Kai-shek, Chiang Ching-kuo, faced with growing political unrest, decided that democracy instead of oppression would be his legacy. Local governments became free, constitutional assemblies were created, the legislature became competitive and finally the president became chosen by direct election. This transformation from strong state to civil society to a democratic state came about because of gradual but continuous change, asked for from below but steadily allowed from above.   Today, Taiwan has become the first entirely free part of China in 5000 years. It is a model on how democracies can be built.

The Democratization Debate

Since the 1970s, democracy has been on the march.[6] Thomas Carothers notes that in the last quarter of the twentieth century, trends in several nations resulted in a move "away from dictatorial rule toward more liberal and often more democratic governance."[7]   Carothers argues that Western observers have seen

these trends as part of a larger process, "a global democratic trend that thanks to Samuel Huntington has widely come to be known as the 'third wave' of democracy." [8]

Between 1974 and 1990, the world saw the transition of approximately thirty nations from "non-democratic to democratic political systems," which, according to Samuel Huntington, constitutes a "wave of democratization."[9] Huntington went on to define the wave as "a group of transitions from non-democratic to democratic regimes that occur within a specified period of time and that significantly outnumber transitions in the opposite direction during that period of time."[10]

Support for Huntington's claim can be found in Freedom House's *Freedom in the World* survey, which quantitatively measures the degree to which nations are free and democratic.[11] Results of this survey show that the number of "sovereign states" has increased substantially over the past forty years, going from 150 in 1972 to 192 in 2002. In addition, the survey points to the "dramatic progress in the expansion of freedom and democratic governance." In 1972, the survey suggested that there were 43 'free' countries, while 38 were only 'partly free' and 47 were 'not free.' However, over the last quarter century, the number of states considered free has doubled while the proportion of states considered not free has shrunk. Today, the survey states that currently 89 nations are rated 'free,' 56 'partly free' and 47 'not free.'[12]

The most dramatic cases of democratization have occurred in three major regions: the Asia-Pacific region, Central and Eastern Europe, and Latin America. Democratization has been particularly weak in the Muslim world where 27 states with majority-Muslim populations are considered 'not free.' It is important to note, however, that the survey finds no direct causal link between belief in Islam and resistance to democracy.[13] It is also important to note that dividing countries into these simple categories based on their respective degrees of freedom may oversimplify the complexities of democratization.[14]

Although there has been an overall trend towards increased democratization in the world, there have also been setbacks. Between 1974 and 1991, 22 countries that moved into the 'free' category have since lost their 'free' status.[15] Larry Diamond points out that some prominent third wave democracies have been regressing and that the proportion of electoral democracies seems to be reaching equilibrium. This has led Diamond to conclude that the third wave may be entering a period of "stasis… in which gains for democracy are more or less offset by losses."[16]

Diamond recommends supporting and bolstering the existing third wave democracies that he characterizes as "shallow, illiberal, or only tentatively liberal." Bolstering these democracies would result in "the deepening and enlargement of the ranks of stable, liberal democracies," and "would then generate a much more favourable global environment for renewed democratic expansion, with the cultural capital and institutional models to help launch a fourth wave."[17]

Diamond is guardedly optimistic about the possibility of a fourth wave of democracy occurring. He points out, for example, that of the 53 nations considered by Freedom House to be 'not free,' "the prospects for democratization appear bleak for some time to come."[18] However, optimism is evident in Diamond's analysis when he claims, "we cannot confidently predict where and when a combination of unforeseen events, regime divisions, and popular protest might open a game of democratic transition."[19]

Additionally, it seems that Diamond sees something of an inevitable trajectory of democratic transition. He claims that "universal norms of democracy and human rights will become embedded in international dialogue and action" and that the "universality" of liberal democracy will eventually be affirmed in the world. Diamond projects a future in which a number of states currently considered 'not free' will undergo transitions to democracy and "generate a fourth wave of global democratization."[20]

The idea that waves of democratization are followed by reverse waves reflects an application of Hegel's conception of a dialectic of history to the theory of democratic transition.[21] Although Huntington acknowledges that history is not "unidirectional," it seems clear that the third wave paradigm assumes that democracy will be spread throughout the world by fits and starts. This spread of democracy ultimately results in a scenario where, over time, if world leaders push the democracy agenda forward,[22] the number of fits will be reduced and the number of starts will be increased.

Thomas Carothers observes that the transition paradigm's analytic framework has been widely received by the U.S. foreign policy and democracy promoting communities.[23] During the third wave, active democracy promotion initiatives by government and non-governmental organizations increased significantly.[24] The successes of democracy promotion efforts over the period of the third wave helped to solidify this paradigm as a key to informing democratization policy. Gretchen Casper and Michelle Taylor argue that after an

apparent transition to democracy occurs, both national actors and parties involved in international democracy promotion share in the euphoria of the birth of new democracy.[25]

To illustrate the complexity of democratization, Geraint Parry and Michael Moran point out that democratization is not a "once and for all event" and that "even the long-established democracies have continued to experience substantial political change, and this political change bears in highly complex ways on the question of democratization."[26]

But there are differing degrees to the consolidation of democracy within a nation. It is possible for a country to be procedurally democratic while lacking deeply integrated and institutionalized democratic consolidation.[27] Carothers claims that several third wave democracies exist in a 'grey zone.' Many of these countries have failed to solidify a well-functioning form of democracy and fail to fit within the framework of the third wave transition paradigm.[28]

Carothers suggests that democracy assistance practitioners are sometimes naïve, but many democracy promoters understand the flaws inherent in the process of democratization, including a tendency to view democratization efforts in a simplistically coherent way. Moreover, democracy promoters see the goal of increasing democracy abroad as a noble, cause-oriented activity. Thus, democracy promoters will apply a degree of optimism and enthusiasm to their efforts that may be misconstrued as simplistic analysis by outside observers, when in actual fact, a great deal of hard-minded analysis is used to inform policy. In the end, despite all of the inherent dilemmas of democracy assistance, it remains the right thing to do, both as a matter of policy and as a matter of priority for international aid.[29] The promotion of democracy abroad is not, however, simply a wholly 'noble' activity and underlying most efforts in the international arena are a host of corollary objectives and influences.

The analysis of foreign policy has become increasingly complex in a post-Cold War era. As Andrew Moravcsik argues, "The relationship between states and the surrounding domestic and transnational society in which they are embedded critically shapes state behavior by influencing the social purposes underlying state preferences."[30] The national interest, therefore, must increasingly incorporate broader international concerns.

Globalization has likewise had a profound impact on democracy in the world.[31] The necessity of cooperation in international relations derives from a changing world order – where, because of globalization, power is no longer situated neatly within state borders. New information and communication technologies have caused power to be diffused to non-governmental individuals and groups. As a result, nations must incorporate elements of 'soft power' (economic, cultural, and social power) into their foreign policy objectives, rather than relying on traditional 'hard power' (military power, sanctions) to promote their objectives abroad.[32]

Democracy promotion, then, becomes increasingly important as 'soft power' agendas become more prominent in the foreign policies of developed nations. As we attempt to promote democracy abroad, it seems clear that we must also increase our understanding of the nations we wish to assist. We must also re-examine the policies and strategies we use to achieve the goal of strengthening democracy throughout the world. If the process of democratization is not as coherent as was once thought, then we must increase our efforts to understand how democratization initiatives work – from country to country and from project to project.

Democracy promotion, therefore, is one of the most active areas in development. Democratic capacity building is now one of the pillars of the World Bank's overall efforts. Burke warns us that it will be hard. Kant cheers us by saying it can be done.   But does Canada have anything special to contribute?

Canada's Niche in International Democratic Development

Canadians are modest about the achievements of our democracy. Janet Ajzenstat, in her cheeky and stimulating *The Once and Future Canadian Democracy*, reviews our recent history of the Meech Lake debate, the Charlottetown Accord and other assorted failures and concludes: "Well, we've had the funerals, where's the wedding? If you know friends, get me an invitation."[33] But Ajzenstat also makes the point that Canadians have contributed far more to the realm of political ideas than is generally recognized (certainly by ourselves). In 1806, for example, Pierre Bédard in the journal *Le Canadien* described the new idea of responsible government, at a time when it had only been operating in Great Britain for a few decades: "the Ministry must necessarily have a majority in the House of Commons. When it loses the influence that has been given to it…it is relieved." Bédard was thrown in jail for his pains but the idea stuck, and in 1836 Robert Baldwin elaborated the concept (to greater acclaim) in his well-known letter to the Colonial

secretary. When Lord Durham came to Canada to write his famous report, there was already a substantial "made in Canada" theory of responsible government. Canada innovated again in 1867, with a North American version of Parliamentary "mixed government" in which a Monarch, Senate and House of Commons were wedded to a federal state. In 1887, the Liberal party took a gamble on tolerance by making a member of the French-Canadian minority its leader, at a time of rising religious and ethnic discord. Canada was also one of the leaders in peacefully transferring the British Empire into the Commonwealth. A party dedicated to breaking up the country - the Parti Québécois - has been allowed to contest elections and propose referenda and that party, in turn, under its leader René Lévesque, brought in groundbreaking legislation on election financing. The Charter of Rights in 1982 added language rights to the traditional list of legal and political rights and, in so doing, made the Charter into a standard of civic rights for minorities rather than ethnic territorial nationalism. We have had the occasional funeral but, all in all, we have much to celebrate in our record of governance.

So, it is fair to say that a country experienced in parliamentary democracy in a federal state, with a multicultural society and a social democratic ethos, might have things to say of interest to some parts of the world.

With this governance tradition, Canada has also made the promotion and development of democracy a key priority in its international initiatives over the past decade, although never with the rhetorical flavour of President Bush. Prior to the announcement of the 2004 international policy review, Canada's last foreign policy review took place in the mid-1990s, with hearings of the Special Joint Parliamentary Committee held in 1994. In 1995 the Canadian government tabled its official statement on Canadian foreign policy, *Canada in the World,* in which it set forth three broad objectives for the country's international relations:

- the promotion of prosperity and employment;
- the projection of Canadian security within a stable global framework; and
- the projection of Canadian values and culture in the world, including respect for democracy.

In principle, *Canada in the World* provided Ottawa with a clear framework in which to guide its international activities.[34] Federal departments could then utilize these guiding principles when engaging in activities

related to the promotion of democracy beyond Canadian borders, to ensure that they are consistent with the country's larger foreign policy objectives. The policies, programs and projects of various departments and public organizations can also be developed and evaluated on the basis of these three foreign policy objectives.

In Canada, CIDA has taken the lead in promoting democracy and governance capacity building; the organization has pledged support to international development by focusing its Official Development Assistance and activities on six areas of main concern:

- basic human needs;
- women in development;
- infrastructure services;
- human rights, democracy and good governance;
- private sector development; and
- the environment.

Beyond CIDA funding, there are several non-governmental organizations (NGOs) active in Canada, which possess specialized democracy-promotion skills. Groups such as the Institute on Governance and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities have an international reputation and associated expertise that have made a substantial contribution to the promotion of democracy.[35] While these organizations contribute to securing *democratic values* abroad, they have been unable to fulfill this goal in a comprehensive manner, as democratic development is not their core mandate.[36] Moreover, a sense of collaboration and leadership between groups is visibly absent. The need for policy coherence between NGOs can be seen by an examination of the multiplicity of objectives that are undertaken by democracy promotion organizations - these groups can be duplicating efforts or at times, seem to be working at cross-purposes. The policies and mandates of several such institutions operating across the country are outlined in Working paper 2005-02c.

To highlight this lack of cohesion is in no way to minimize the valuable and considerable contributions of Canadian departments and NGOs. Rather, it is to suggest that a Canadian-based institution leveraging the international reputation of the Government of Canada could make a considerable contribution to the promotion of democracy abroad; such an Institute could provide the means for addressing policy coherence

among the disparate actors in the democracy field. Key to this goal is the need to ensure that the use of scarce resources in democracy programs is not undermined by the adoption of other policies with conflicting objectives. The mechanisms to ensure that the practices of governments' policies and NGOs are complementary are not in place in Canada today. As such, a Canadian-based institution with its experience in a federal, ethnically diverse, multilateral and bilingual country could make a serious contribution to the promotion of democracy abroad.

A Multiplicity of Directions

The international promotion of democracy is therefore already an important tenet of Canadian foreign policy. Canada is widely recognized for supporting democracy abroad as evidenced by its willingness to provide electoral assistance to fledgling democracies, support grassroots democracy through civil society organizations and denounce regimes engaged in egregious abuses of democracy. The activities of Ottawa fall into three broad categories: (1) professional and technical assistance missions; (2) aid to NGOs involved in democracy promotion/support for international protocols and institutions addressing governance; and (3) the promotion of democratic values.

Through the activities of various domestic organizations and the specialized knowledge of citizens, Canada has been near the forefront of the international community in providing support for democracy abroad. Many Canadians may be surprised to learn that Elections Canada lends its expertise to several projects abroad. The organization undertakes a host of international activities in response to requests from FAC and CIDA, as well as various international organizations and individual countries. These projects include advising on constitutional and election law provisions, conducting pre-election evaluations and providing professional support. Elections Canada has also sought to partner with its peers internationally, and, in 1996, Elections Canada and Instituto Federal Electoral (the Mexican election agency) signed a five-year agreement for information exchange.[37]

Presently, officials at Elections Canada are working on the Elections and Registration in Afghanistan Project, which is designed to support the preparation of national elections in this transitioning state. Under phase one of the initiative, Elections Canada has provided specialists in systems of representation, voter registration, civic education and political party law.[38] Typically, recipient nations have welcomed Canadian electoral assistance, due in part to our country's lack of identification as a former colonial power or as a

superpower, as well as our bilingual character and mixed-law traditions; the Canadian mosaic with its tolerance for multiculturalism is an appealing model for many similarly diverse nations.

Aware of the influence of civil society groups in promoting democratic change and advancement, Canada has supported numerous domestic organizations in these efforts. It has made an attempt to back support local initiatives and ideas on how to strengthen democracy, while also ensuring that expertise is available to support change. In 1988, Ottawa assisted in the establishment of the International Centre for Human Rights and Democracy Development, which works to strengthen democratic institutions and enhance access of civil society organizations to policy debate and decision-making.[39] As well, there are a series of other smaller associations that partake in a wide range of democracy promotion activities, including election monitoring, voter education, strengthening policy capacity and other forms of legislation and training of foreign officials, to name a select few.

The Canadian Institute of Public Administration has – over the past   decade – undertaken a variety of projects in partnership with other Canadian organizations with financial support from CIDA. Its international programming has focused on government reform, strategic and financial planning, decentralization, poverty reduction and climate change. Moreover, Canada has provided financing to global organizations, such as the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), which brings together both governments and NGOs to improve and consolidate electoral processes.

Canada has also been a vigorous advocate of international protocols and mechanisms to support democracy promotion. At the Organization of American States (OAS), Ottawa played the lead role in the establishment of the Unit for the Promotion of Democracy, which provides guidance and assistance to member states in strengthening their democratic institutions and processes.[40] Through the OAS, Canada also championed the establishment of a Special Fund for Strengthening Democracy, which is designed to assist member states faced with threats to their democratic processes. And recently, the Commonwealth heads of government accepted a Canadian initiative to put their democratic principles into action by creating the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG). The mandate of the CMAG is to recommend collective Commonwealth responses to serious violations of democracy and constitutional rule.[41]

A scan of Canadian institutions involved in democracy promotion abroad has led to two key conclusions. First, it is clear that there are many important actors presently active in the field of democracy promotion, that often have little understanding of their peers and colleagues in the field. Secondly, policy coherence requires a driver of coherence.[42] The Democracy Canada Institute would gather and refine information on Canadian experiences and practices for democratic development while enabling relationships and partnerships with the family of democracy promotion groups already in existence in Canada and abroad. This new institution would leverage the valuable expertise of present actors, which could provide for significant coordination and collaboration between organizations.

So, the ability of Canada and Canadians to contribute to a worldwide movement for more democracy and better governance is already proven. Canadians hold senior positions in the democracy offices of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Organization of American States (OAS). NDI employs 29 Canadians in senior capacities in its overseas offices. Canadians employed at the World Bank and the UNDP play a lead role in governance and rule of law programs. Canadians help set policy at the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) in Stockholm and the International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES) in Washington, and Canadians have held leadership positions within the international headquarters of the main political party internationals. Canadian parliamentarians, ministers, MLAs and others have participated in study missions and exchange fora and have provided advice to their elected counterparts around the world. Canadian universities supply expertise to a diverse set of governance projects within Foreign Affairs Canada (FAC) and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) both have a portfolio of successful democracy and governance programs around the world.

To summarize, Canadian experiences and models are in demand around the world for a number of reasons:

- Canadians are well received abroad and Canadian motives, particularly in the sensitive area of political development, are seldom challenged. A Canadian organization would find great receptivity around the world in the field of democracy and governance;
- Canada's multilingual, multicultural, tolerant milieu tends to produce people who exhibit sensitivity to foreign cultures and sensibilities and who thrive in difficult foreign settings;

- Canada's political parties have highly developed grassroots organizing models that are relevant in many developing countries. Unlike the large, publicly funded European parties or the private money-reliant American parties, Canadian political parties are decentralized, volunteer driven, have modest budgets with both private and public funding and operate under strict political spending limits. Canada's political parties are valued and important members of the main international groupings of political parties like Liberal International, the Socialist International and the Centrist Parties International. As such, Canada's parties and party leaders are already part of an international network of political activists;

- Canada's parliamentary system and the experiences of current and former Canadian parliamentarians are relevant around the world. Most emerging democracies have parliamentary systems, and the Canadian model is more applicable to nascent parliaments than the unique, expensive and unwieldy American system. Quebec's National Assembly can provide positive examples in countries where the political system resembles the French model. Canadian provincial legislatures are similar in scale and budget to the legislatures in many developing nations and can be a source of legislative expertise and best practices;

- Canada's federation is a model of decentralization, power sharing and respect for minority rights. The flexible nature of Canada's constitution has allowed a constructive and pragmatic devolution of power to the provinces - maintaining Canada's unity and integrity through many trying times;

- Canada is world renowned for administering fair, efficient elections and for maintaining accurate voter registries;

- Canada has a relatively high rate of unionization and has advanced labour legislation at the national and provincial level;

- The Canadian business community has a positive international reputation and is well placed to offer advice on ethical business practices around the world;

- Canada has both a successful public broadcaster and a dynamic private media sector. The quality of training provided to Canadian journalists, particularly through the public broadcaster, and the generally high standards of Canadian political journalism can be used as a basis for training journalists around the world.

More often than not, Canadians contribute to other organizations and other countries' aid and foreign policy objectives – the large coterie of Canadians working for the National Democratic Institute for International

Affairs (NDI) and IFES, for example, while highly valued by their respective organizations, contribute primarily to U.S. foreign policy priorities in the democracy field and only tangentially to Canadian interests. Two of the more important Canadian organizations in the democracy and governance arena, the International Center for Human Rights and Democratic Development (Rights and Democracy) and the Forum of Federations both downplay their Canadian genesis and are governed by international boards of directors which dilute their Canadian character.

This dilution of Canadian-ness in Canadian democracy assistance efforts reflects the practice of the past decade or so, but does not necessarily reflect the intent of Canadian political decision-makers. The early internal government discussions around the origins of the first Canadian democracy assistance vehicle, the International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development (Rights and Democracy), suggested that policy makers were seeking to create an organization similar to the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), but also made clear that the organization should be Canadian in nature and in its governance. In a memo circulated within the government in 1985 it was suggested that Canada develop a democracy foundation and suggested that the model that would be best received would be "that of a nationally-based political foundation, representative of a social, business, political, union or other organization in the donor country [Canada]." (Anonymous "confidential memo," March 16, 1985) The memo went on to cite the German political party foundations and the NED as the international models Canada should explore.

A 1987 memo written to the Special Assistant to the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Joe Clark, suggested that Canada should look to the successes of the Scandinavians in the democracy field (the Olof Palme Foundation of the Swedish Social Democratic Party being one example), and to the model of the German party foundations, but was clear that a Canadian foundation should "…be Canadian, not internationalist insofar as its voting members are concerned. If a group is to be useful for the integrity and guidance of the institute, it should be clear that program decisions are made by Canadians." (Robin Sears, June 11, 1987) The memo went on to argue that a new Canadian institute should be based in Ottawa with no connection to either government departments or other NGOs.

The memo was written in support of then Minister Joe Clark's proposal for a democratic development institute. Clark's proposal, although modified and delayed several times, informed the legislation that

established the International Center for Human Rights and Democratic Development in 1988. During the planning phase for the Centre, a Canadian parliamentary task force traveled to Washington to meet with NED officials to consult on potential structures, but Rights and Democracy never did evolve into a democracy foundation. Now is the time to make that early idea a reality.

Lessons Learned from International Experience

The challenges of democracy building are being addressed through two complementary international processes. Although still in early stages, traditional international "clubs" of nations, often organized along geographical lines or reflecting current or historical trade relationships, are giving way to new alignments - alignments based on shared values rather than shared interests. Examples of this new trend include efforts to start a "democracy caucus" within the United Nations, the governmental and non-governmental forums of the Community of Democracies, the World Movement for Democracy, the newly formed Club of Madrid (a grouping of former heads of state and government), the new democratic activism of the OAS, the increasingly strong democracy focus of the OSCE, the parliamentary forum of the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) and others.

An adjunct of the beginning of this values-based international realignment has been the growth of non-governmental democracy foundations or institutes. Formed to provide an arms-length relationship between governments and official foreign policy, these foundations have a distinctly political flavour - their political orientation reflecting the political nature of the problems afflicting democratic transition in the developing world. At a July 2004 gathering of international democracy assistance organizations in The Hague, more than forty democracy-oriented organizations convened to discuss international democracy promotion. In a field once the exclusive domain of the German political party foundations or "stiftungen," and joined 20-years ago by the U.S.-based NED, the number of new players within the international democracy field has surprised even the discipline's most ardent supporters.

The democracy assistance field, which includes, among other topics, political party development, support for fair and open elections, legislative development and women's political participation, is dominated by single and multi-party political institutes and foundations. Political party and democracy foundations have a number of strategic and programmatic commonalities – all have strong but indirect ties to the highest political echelons in their home country, and all draw on the experiences of political and democracy

practitioners. Each organization leverages its political connections to have more impact on democratic processes in target program countries. All of the organizations discussed in this paper maintain an arms-length distance from government (most are private non-profit organizations) but receive their core funding from public sources.

A Canadian democracy foundation would join the growing group of nations looking for a distinctive entry into the international democracy assistance arena. In a paper presented at The Hague gathering, Uwe Optenhoegel, International Director of the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, and Roel Von Meijenfeldt, Executive Director of the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (IMD), summarized the imperative for increasing European involvement in democracy promotion this way:

> The new international context that has emerged after the September 11th, 2001 attacks on the U.S.A. has resulted into the promotion of democracy becoming a more central strategic objective of the US government. This has added significant momentum to the focus on how democracy can be effectively promoted and through what international modalities. What is the distinct European contribution to this challenge?

> The European Union (EU) is in a process of transforming itself through enlargement, the writing of the first EU constitution and the enhancement of its Common Foreign and Security policy, for example by the creation of the position of a EU foreign minister.

> These developments make it appear appropriate and timely to engage in deliberations about a more elaborated European profile in the global context of democracy promotion.[43]

More entrants, European or otherwise, will be welcomed into the democracy assistance field because the promotion of democracy does not lend itself to unilateralism. Kenneth Wollack, President of the Washington-based NDI, one of the largest NGOs engaged in democracy assistance, put it this way in his 2004 testimony before the U.S. Congress:

> Cooperative approaches convey a deeper truth to nations attempting a transition to democracy: that they are not ceding something to the United States when they develop

democratic institutions; rather, they are joining a community of nations. That other nations have traversed the same course. That while autocracies are inherently isolated and fearful of the outside world, democracies can count on natural allies and an active support structure. And that other nations are concerned and are watching - something that would-be autocrats, who flourish outside the glare of the international spotlight, will bear in mind.[44]

NDI, its counterpart, the International Republican Institute (IRI), and other U.S. democracy organizations have grown exponentially in the last decade - NDI's revenues in 1994 totalled $14.9 million USD, while 2004 revenues may reach $60 million USD. U.S. government support for democracy programs comes from a variety of sources and through various mechanisms. In the early 1980s, democracy programs were funded and implemented primarily through the NED and its core institutes - NDI, IRI, the American Center for International Labor Solidarity (ACILS), and the Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE). Since the 1980's, overseas development assistance (ODA) support from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) allowed for a significant increase in U.S. democracy promotion activities, as did the U.S. Department of State's application of Economic Support Funds (ESF) for democracy assistance. In more recent years, increased resources within the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (DRL), and Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) housed with the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs (NEA) have allowed American organizations to vastly expand their democracy assistance work. Total yearly U.S. democracy funding, through the NED, USAID and the Department of State, exceeds $1 billion USD.

A more complete survey of institutions devoted to promoting democratic values is outlined in Working paper 2005-02d. They can be simplified into three main categories and two sub-categories – political party institutes like the German party model, international or multilateral organizations like the Stockholm-based International Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) and national umbrella institutions like the NED. One sub-category includes smaller, more research-oriented organizations, affiliated with universities, the best example being the Australian Centre for Democratic Institutions. The second sub-category includes nationally-based organizations with a multilateral character, for example organizations with an international board of directors or with international subsidiaries. Examples of this category include the International Foundation for Elections Systems (IFES), which, while Washington-based, has an international board of

directors and a European subsidiary. Another example of this type of organization is the Ottawa-based International Forum of Federations.

The individual party institute model has never been seriously contemplated in Canada. The (Lortie) Royal Commission on Electoral Reform and Party Financing (1991) did put forward a recommendation for the establishment of publicly funded party foundations, but their mandate was to be limited to domestic policy development and political education. Canada's parties, while active within their respective international groupings - the New Democratic Party within the Socialist International, and the Liberal Party within the Liberal International - have not embraced the concept of developing individual international foundations.

The government of Canada is a participant in most of the multilateral democracy assistance vehicles, including the OSCE, OAS and IDEA, but Canada's multilateral democracy assistance endeavors seldom reflect unique Canadian experiences and values. Canada has many fine democracy assistance programs, governmental and non-governmental, but a consensus has emerged that there is a lack of coordination and policy coherence that makes the sum of Canada's international democracy efforts less than the total of its parts.

With single party institutes being unattractive in the Canadian context and multilateral institutions lacking Canadian-specific style and content, the nationally-based umbrella democracy foundations may be the most appropriate models for a new Canadian foundation. The organizations that best fit the model of the internationalization of democracy assistance and exemplify the cooperative model of working both with international partners and through indigenous organizations, include the NED, the IMD and the Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD). The National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) will also be included in this comparison. Even though NDI is loosely affiliated with the U.S. Democratic Party, its non-partisan approach, scope and scale of work and worldwide reputation make it resemble an umbrella democracy assistance organization more than a party institute.

One important overarching lesson learned – repeated in different forms by the executives of the organizations below – is that democracy assistance must be process oriented and that political outcomes cannot be orchestrated or influenced from abroad. The best democracy assistance organizations are open about their work, respond to requests from interlocutors in the recipient country, and never attempt to

impose an outside agenda. The organizations described in this paper work with both government and opposition political tendencies and support indigenous efforts for reform.

Carl Gershman, President of the NED, believes that a successful democracy foundation should pursue political independence, seek domestic consensus and maintain ideological and programmatic balance. The NED jealously guards its and non-governmental status political independence and has observed a strict policy of treating its core institutes equally. NED programs constitute a balanced mix of efforts to strengthen political processes, support democratic labour movements and promote private enterprise.

Gershman also points to indigenous demands for democracy and freedom as the imperative behind the NED's work. "Democracy assistance is about connecting and helping what already exists, not creating something new or foreign," says Gershman. "There is an authentic democracy movement around the world that arises from common belief and shared values," Gershman continues. "The NED respects the integrity, dignity and autonomy of those it helps."

Reiterating the lesson that democracy institutes should be arms-length from foreign policy, Gershman notes that, "foreign policy is often about self interest. A country like Canada can be ennobled by joining in a common effort that goes beyond the country's direct interests. It may be a highfalutin idea, but democracy is also a practical cause."

A second lesson of international experience in democracy assistance is that while domestic political party participation in democracy assistance activities is crucial, democracy foundations work best when party input into the day-to-day work of the foundation is minimized. In the American model, the party foundations have a loose affiliation with the parent party and no direct coordination. The NED staff and board serve as a policy sounding board and provide program and financial accountability. The Dutch IMD has full time party-affiliated programme officers on staff, but professional, non-partisan program staff manages activities. The WFD has historically provided funding directly to parties to support their own bilateral activities, but that model is in the process of changing.

The WFD, along with discretionary grants and some self-initiated programs, provides funding to British political parties to implement programs with partner parties and organizations. Senior executives within the

WFD regard its ability to operate coordinated party and civil society programs in this way, under one organizational roof, as a real strength given the interconnected nature of political life. While this model is occasionally challenging to maintain, the WFD has achieved success on the ground. The WFD has gained a positive international reputation, but has redefined its strategy to improve program coherence, increasing the focus of its work in a smaller number of countries and selecting its priorities to reflect those of its participating parties as well as other influences.

A third lesson drawn from the last decade of democracy assistance is that the problems of state-building and the promotion of good governance are complex and must be addressed by experienced practitioners. In the first decade or so of NDI's work, the institute was often described as a "political peace corps." Relying on enthusiastic young people to organize seminars and events and develop briefing materials, NDI programs would draw on the expertise of temporary pro bono 'trainers' - political practitioners that would spend a short period in country. While this program model worked well and is still in limited operation, the growing sophistication of democracy assistance efforts mean NDI's field staff are usually political and legislative experts in their own right, many having retired from successful political careers or having extended leave or sabbatical to pursue international work. The typical profile of a senior NDI country director is a person with a graduate degree, twelve or more years of directly relevant expertise and senior level political experience. NDI employs several former party leaders, more than a dozen former ministers and members of parliament and dozens of former senior party staff members

A fourth lesson concerns domestic political consensus and participation in a democracy institute. Carl Gershman notes that the NED was the creation of four partners – Democrats, Republicans, business and labour. Created during the Reagan administration, and supported by Presidents Bush, Clinton and George W. Bush, the NED has always enjoyed broad political support. The senior executives of the IMD believe that the strength of the organization lies in the engagement of all mainstream Dutch political parties in program design. Foreign policy and development assistance, they say, is best accomplished in an atmosphere of domestic political consensus.

A final overarching lesson concerns cooperation and collaboration. Democracy itself is a process that attempts to reconcile competing demands, and democracy assistance works best in an atmosphere of pluralism and complementary effort. Democracy foundations have recently instituted regular meetings for

experience sharing and the evolution of values-oriented international groupings like the Community of Democracies and World Movement for Democracy will help forge common approaches to problems of democratic governance.

Conclusion: A Modest Proposal for the Democracy Canada Institute

In the words of Prime Minister Paul Martin, in an announcement regarding the creation of a Canada Corps in May of this year, "Canada has long been recognized as a leading voice in the world for democracy, pluralism, human rights and the rule of law. Groups and individuals from across the country are already sharing their expertise in these areas with the world…" While, as discussed, this is undoubtedly true, our analysis of existing efforts would suggest that Canadian expertise has not yet been harnessed to its full potential – a shortcoming that could, we believe, be lessened through the creation of a non-partisan, independent, Democracy Canada Institute.

A considerable amount of research and reflection would, of course, be required before any new initiative is undertaken; but as an initial contribution, our analysis has determined that the framework for such an Institute should include the following:

- The Institute should report to Parliament and the members of its Board should enjoy consensus support by Parliament. Various mechanisms can be explored but the objective is to have an organization supported by all parties;

- The Institute should not necessarily replace the existing democratic governance projects of CIDA and DFAIT, which have their own foreign policy logic, but the Institute would be mandated by Parliament to develop a coherent democratic governance strategy that would be worthy of the support of Parliament, be implemented by existing actors in the field and engage the active involvement of current and former Members of Parliament. Should the Institute model prove to be a success, however, it could assume responsibility for existing programming;

- The Institute would fund projects suggested by the existing rich NGO community, and government agencies like Elections Canada, although it could recruit expertise where it does

not currently exist. The Institute would also entertain partnerships between Canadian NGOs and agencies and local partners in the target countries. The Institute would reorganize, assist, recruit, co-enable and facilitate existing Canadian expertise, listed in Working paper 2005-02d and work with the international institutions listed in Working paper 2005-02d;

- Canadian political parties have expertise that can be useful abroad especially through organizations like Liberal International, Socialist International or Christian Democrats International. The Democracy Canada Institute would work with all parties to encourage them to contribute internationally. A multi-party approach is preferable, but if the parties chose to create independent party foundations, Democracy Canada could work with these vehicles;

- Part of the important work of the Institute would be to recruit former Members of Parliament, party activists and officials with expertise in the mechanics of elections, civil society or government structure, willing to give their time to work or consult abroad;

- Based on an assessment of existing organizations, both within Canada and abroad, it is anticipated that the Institute would require an annual appropriation of approximately $50 million. These funds would be utilized for both the administrative maintenance of the organization and the strategic funding for international grants and programs.

The above represents an initial outline of our preliminary conceptualizations of the structure and substance of a Canadian Democratic Institute. A supplementary conference, attended by interested stakeholders in the international democracy promotion community will be held later this fall, to provide feedback and give further substance to these initial framing ideas.

Therefore we recommend a Democracy Canada Institute, which should be established as a non-profit, non-governmental organization, would be endowed with significant yearly funding for its own programs and would provide grants to partner institutes and organizations. The Democracy Canada Institute could assume responsibility for many existing Canadian democracy initiatives including parliamentary strengthening and political development programs, thus reducing the amount of "new" funding required for its creation, and the new entity would work collaboratively with established democracy and governance

organizations abroad. Democracy Canada would reinforce the established governance, democracy, human rights and media development community in Canada by providing a more coherent policy structure, a higher Canadian profile abroad and, in some cases, an increased and more predictable source of grant funding.

Fyodor Dostoyevsky, in the *Brothers Karamazov*, featured a Grand Inquisitor berating the Lord returned to earth for promising to make mankind free when human beings are manifestly incapable of doing so: "Nothing has ever been more insupportable for a man of human society, than freedom," the Inquisitor sneers. To repress freedom then, he is asked: "Is everything permitted?" "Yes" is the terrible reply. Regretfully, we continue to know something about repression in the early years of this new century: terrorists use children as shields in Russia, thousands die in the Darfur region as private armies are let loose, soldiers and aid workers die in Afghanistan, trying to bring order far away from home; the list of atrocities and deprivations could go on and on. The Grand Inquisitor would not be surprised.

We may only make progress internationally in inches, when yards and kilometres are needed, but working to make the Grand Inquisitor a relic of history is still an ethical imperative. The rule of law is "the wise restraint that makes man free," and Canadians have more success than most in restraining our impulses and creating a society of discussion, tolerance and pluralism. If we know something about wise governance that the world needs, it is our duty to pass our insights to others. It should be the mission of Canadians, as a free people, to join with other free peoples, to say to the Grand Inquisitor, "No, not everything is permitted" and to provide a counter-example of how to live. The Democracy Canada Institute can play a modest role in this noble cause.

Notes

[1] The authors would like to thank Carol Hales, David Donovan and Denis Silva for their assistance in research and writing. They assisted in completing a scan of Canadian and international organizations active in the field and helped organize a series of interviews in Ottawa and Washington. This paper presents a framework for assessing the priority and our tentative conclusions about a Democracy Canada Institute. The next phase of the project will be a more fully rounded description of the structure and functions of a Democracy Canada Institute. This paper will be presented to an international workshop in Washington in November. We want to thank the Walter and Duncan Gordon Foundation for their support of the project.

[2] Francis Fukuyama, *State-Building* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2004) 103.

[3] Jacques Barzun, *A Jacques Barzun Reader*, ed. Michael Murray (New York: Harper Collins, 2002) 475.

[4] Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (London: Everyman's Library, 1971) 93.

[5] Barzun 488.

[6] For a detailed review of the broader international context of democracy promotion, see: George Perlin, "International Assistance to Democratic Development: A Review," *IRPP Working Paper Series* no. 2003-04 (2003). See also: Thomas Carothers, *Aiding Democracy Abroad: The Learning Curve*. (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1999); Thomas Carothers and Marina Ottaway, eds. *Funding Virtue: Civil Society Aid and Democracy Promotion* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2000); Larry Diamond, *Developing Democracy: Toward Consolidation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999).

[7] Thomas Carothers, "The End of the Transition Paradigm," *Journal of Democracy* 13.1 (2002): 5.

[8] Carothers. *Journal of Democracy*.

[9] Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991) xiii.

[10] Huntington 15.

[11] Freedom House is a "non-partisan and broad based" NGO founded in 1941 to promote democratic values abroad. Freedom House believes that "American leadership in international affairs is essential to the cause of human rights and freedom." Among Freedom House's publications is the *Freedom in the World* survey. This annual survey measures various indicators of freedom in different countries to develop an overall score indicating the level of freedom of a given nation. For more information, visit www.freedomhouse.org.

[12] Adrian Karatnycky, "The 30th Anniversary Freedom House Survey: Liberty's Advances in a Troubled World," *Journal of Democracy* 14.1 (2003): 100.

[13] Karatnycky.

[14] For a detailed discussion of the problems with empirical theories of democracy, see: Quentin Skinner, "The Empirical Theorists of Democracy and Their Critics: A Plague on Both Their Houses," *Political Theory* 1.3 (1973).

[15] Diamond 25.

[16] Diamond 60-61.

[17] Diamond 63.

[18] Diamond 261.

[19] Diamond 263.

[20] Diamond 278.

[21] Huntington 21.

[22] Huntington 316.

[23] Carothers 6.

[24] Perlin.

[25] Gretchen Casper and Michelle M. Taylor, "Discussing Democracy," *Negotiating Democracy: Transitions from Authoritarian Rule*. (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1996)

[26] Geraint Parry and Michael Moran, "Introduction: problems of democracy and democratization," *Democracy and democratization* (London: Routledge).

[27] Jaun J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press: 1997)

[28] Carothers 10. In addition, for a detailed account of the stagnation of Latin American democratic progress and how this fits into the 'gray zone' of democratic development, see: Carlos Santiso, "Promoting Democratic Governance and Preventing the Recurrence of Conflict: The Role of the United Nations Development Programme in Post-Conflict Peace-Building," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 34 (2002): 570. For a similar account of the lack of uniform direction in democratization efforts in Asia, see: Daniel C. Lynch, "International 'Decentering' and Democratization: The Case of Thailand," *International Studies Quarterly* 48 (2004).

[29] Analysis from Kenneth Wollack in a speech to the Journal of Democracy Symposium in 2002 on the book, *Democracy Promotion: The End of the Transition Paradigm?* by Thomas Carothers, Vice President for Studies, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington, DC.

[30] Andrew Moravcsik, "Taking Preferences Seriously: A Liberal Theory of International Politics," *International Organization* 51.4 (1997): 516.

[31] For a discussion of globalization and democracy, see: Zaki Laïdi, "Democracy in Real Time," Journal of Democracy 13.3 (2002); and: Marc F. Plattner, "Globalization and Self-Government," *Journal of Democracy* 13 .3 (2002).

[32] Joseph S. Nye Jr., *The Paradox of American Power: Why the World's Only Superpower Can't Go it Alone* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).

[33] Janet Ajzenstat, *The Once and Future Democracy* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003) 147.

[34] For example, see Andrew F. Cooper, *Canadian Foreign Policy: Old Habits and New Directions* (Scarborough: Prentice-Hall, 1997).

[35] Leslie Campbell, *Democracy Canada: Turning Canadian Democratic Values and Experiences into International Action* (Hemisphere Focus, 13 January 2004) 2-3.

[36] Campbell.

[37] See: Elections Canada, 2004, http://www.elections.ca/content.asp?section=gen&document=ec90770&dir=bkg&lang=e&textonly=false

[38] Elections Canada

[39] Interview, Ottawa, 8 July 2004.

[40] See: Organization of American States, 2004, http://www.oas.org/main/english/

[41] See: Foreign Affairs Canada, 2003, http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/foreign_policy/commonwealth/imoc307-en.asp

[42] Ann Weston and Daniel-Pierre-Antoine, *Poverty and Policy Coherence: A Case Study of Canada's Relations with Developing Countries* (North-South Institute, February 2003) 57.

[43] Uwe Optenhoegel and Roel von Meijenfeldt, *A European Profile in Democracy Promotion* (A paper presented to the European working conference, "Enhancing the European Profile in Democracy Assistance," the Netherlands, July 4-6, 2004).

[44] Statement by Kenneth Wollack, President, National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, before the Committee on International Relations
Subcommittee on International Terrorism, Nonproliferation and Human Rights,
U.S. House of Representatives**,** July 7, 2004.