



**National Endowment
for Democracy**

Supporting freedom around the world

2012 Strategy Document

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NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR DEMOCRACY STRATEGY DOCUMENT

Executive Summary

Although NED’s mission of strengthening democracy

around the world remains constant, changes in the state of democracy and in the field of democracy assistance call for an evolution in the way this mission is carried out.

For the first four years after the adoption of our last Strategy Document in January 2007, democracy experienced a steady decline. The number of electoral democracies in the world dropped from 123 in 2006 to 115 at the end of 2010, according to Freedom House, while the number of countries registering declines in political rights from 2006 to 2010 exceeded those registering gains by 70 to 47. Nevertheless, the momentous events in the Arab world since the start of 2011 may have shifted the momentum in favor of democratic change. After all the talk of “Arab exceptionalism”, the Arab Spring affirmed with remarkable power the universalism of the democratic idea.

It is clear that the coming years will witness a continuing struggle pitting those pressing for greater freedom against an array of forces that are determined to resist democratic change in at least four key arenas:

1. Civil Society: Autocratic regimes harass and imprison activists, pass restrictive laws, sponsor their own GONGOs (government-organized non-governmental organizations), and

prohibit or tightly control the work of international democracy-support groups.

2. Cyberspace: In response to the growing use of new communications technologies by human rights defenders, bloggers, and democracy activists, governments employ sophisticated measures of filtering, censorship, and surveillance, and are trying to establish new international norms to legitimize information control and warrantless surveillance.

3. Legitimacy and political ideas: As international opinion surveys attest, democracy is widely deemed to be the only legitimate form of government. Consequently, most authoritarian regimes claim democratic credentials and present a façade of democratic rule – assertions that must be discredited.

4. Performance and Governance: While many Third Wave democracies have made significant progress in consolidating democratic institutions, maintaining economic growth, and delivering for their people, others have experienced democratic breakdown, backsliding, and deteriorating performance.

NED brings a variety of assets to its work, including a bottom-up approach to grant-making that empowers the most effective grassroots activists and is responsive to local needs. With its core institutes, it has a structure that encompasses the vital political, social, and economic dimensions of democracy. And through the World Movement for Democracy, International Forum for Democratic Studies, *Journal of Democracy*, Reagan-Fascell Democracy Fellows Program, and Center for International Media Assistance, it provides a support system for democratic activists that leverages the impact of grant support.

A Global Perspective

NED has a global perspective that enables it to show solidarity with *all* those defending democratic values and freedom. Its grants program and ancillary activities support and connect with activists working at every stage of development (short of fully consolidated democracy). Each of the following categories presents different challenges:

1) Supporting Democrats in Highly Repressive Societies: NED will continue and, wherever possible, increase its support to democrats in countries such as Burma, Cuba, China, and Uzbekistan, improving their access to information and expanding political space. Some of this support will go to severely repressed minorities (e.g., Tibetans, Uyghurs, Chechens) seeking to defend their minority rights and preserve their identity. NED will help

pro-democracy groups gain secure access to the Internet, defend themselves against malware and denial-of-service attacks, network with counterparts to share experiences and tactics, and connect with donors and technology specialists who address their specific needs. NED will place special emphasis on supporting activists and intellectuals in China, the world's largest and fastest-developing country, where the regime increasingly deploys its wealth and power to become what Liu Xiaobo, the dissident Nobel laureate, calls "a blood transfusion machine for other dictatorships."

2) Assisting Democratic Transitions:

The fall of authoritarian regimes during 2011 highlights the urgency of assisting democratic transitions. This remains a critical strategic priority for the Endowment. The Endowment and its institutes seek to assist transitions in a manner that is responsive to local actors, informed by NED's extensive experience with aiding transitions, and focused on the long-term goal of securing stable democracy under the rule of law. This includes party building and candidate training, programs of voter and civic education, the building of strong civic coalitions to monitor elections, and efforts to involve citizens in monitoring the reform process, defending human rights, and promoting a culture of tolerance and a commitment to democratic values. Young people have an especially important role to play in all of these areas of work, and NED will seek to support and involve them in every way possible.

3) Aiding Democrats in Semi-Authoritarian Countries: Democracy practitioners and scholars alike have become acutely aware that the path from the fall of authoritarian rule to the consolidation of democracy is as protracted as it is precarious, marked by retreats as well as advances. The experiences of Russia, Ukraine, and some Latin American states are instructive in this regard, and it will hardly be surprising if similar problems do not afflict transitions in the Arab world. In many semi-authoritarian states, governments seek to retain autocratic power by stifling or controlling independent civil society groups. In such cases it is especially important not only to provide assistance, but also to encourage democratic governments to exercise political and diplomatic leverage to deter autocrats from closing the political space that democracy activists require.

4) Helping New Democracies Succeed: If democratically-elected governments cannot deliver for citizens in terms of improved economic opportunity, health, and social welfare, they can quickly lose appeal, opening the way to populists who exploit grievances to gain power. Supporting democratic governments' efforts to improve their performance and combat corruption is primarily the task of bilateral and multilateral development-assistance programs. Yet NED and its institutes can help democratic institutions function more effectively and responsively. In troubled democracies NED will help civil society to monitor the functioning of

institutions, agencies and officials, diagnose the causes of ineffective performance, propose reforms, and build civic coalitions to back those reforms.

NED, its core institutes and the international party, labor, and business associations with which they are affiliated, strive to improve governance and the rule of law by fostering the observance of international norms and the establishment of legal frameworks in such fields as human and minority rights, electoral administration and monitoring, corporate governance, freedom of association and expression, and worker rights.

A Comprehensive Approach

NED's grants program is supplemented by several ancillary activities that advance the cause of democracy: the World Movement for Democracy (WMD), for which the Endowment serves as the secretariat; the International Forum for Democratic Studies; and the Center for International Media Assistance (CIMA). These activities are designed to serve the following purposes:

1) Mobilizing Political and Moral Support for Democracy Activists: NED works to build coalitions at both the governmental and non-governmental levels for the defense of civil society. In cooperation with the WMD, NED has mobilized an international effort to call attention to the backlash against the activities of non-governmental organizations and to rally support

for well-established principles governing government-civil society relations.

2) Building Cross-Border Networks: NED pioneered the practice of cross-border democracy assistance in post-communist states, an approach it is now applying to programs in the Middle East and North Africa. The World Movement's regional and functional networks help democracy activists to support, learn from one another, and collaborate on common objectives.

3) Strengthening Cooperation within the Democracy-Assistance Community: NED's exclusive focus on promoting democracy, extensive experience, multi-sectoral structure, commitment to aiding democrats across the world, and ability to represent American citizens' ideals while retaining independence from the U.S. government combine to give NED the standing to convene and foster cooperation between key actors and agencies of the democracy-assistance community.

NED will respond to the increasing use of new communications technologies by democratic activists by supporting norms and approaches to governance regarding technology already enshrined in international law and institutions, experimenting with integrating technology into its grant programs, and funding or collaborating with projects for Internet and digital security.

NED and its institutes will respond to the lack of international support for promoting democracy on the part of some younger democracies of the global South by devoting more concerted efforts to building democratic partnerships and encouraging NGOs in these countries to become advocates for greater democratic commitment on the part of their governments.

4) Using Research to Improve Democratic Practice: The International Forum plays a key role in developing links between scholarship and democratic practice. It publishes the *Journal of Democracy*, the world's best-known publication devoted to the study of democracy; it hosts the Reagan-Fascell Democracy Fellows Program; and it convenes a wide variety of conferences and meetings. The Forum recently collaborated with NED program staff in several high-level forums – comprising leading policy-makers, officials and experts on constitutional design, electoral systems, transitional processes and the countries in question – to outline options for successful transitions in Kyrgyzstan, Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya, and it co-sponsored with the Brookings Institution a major conference exploring the foreign policies of new democracies regarding issues of human rights and democracy.

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR DEMOCRACY

Strategy Document

January 2012

The National Endowment for Democracy (NED) has a clear mission – helping to strengthen democracy around the world – which it has pursued steadily since its founding in 1983. Although that core mission does not change, some of the ways in which it is carried out have to evolve in response to changes both in the state of democracy in the world and in the nature and composition of the field of democracy assistance. Hence the need for a Strategy Document, to be approved by the NED Board every five years.

Over the full period of NED’s existence, democracy has made remarkable advances. But during the first four years since the adoption of our last Strategy Document in January 2007, democracy experienced a gradual but steady decline, leading some scholars to describe the period as a “democratic recession.” According to Freedom House, the number of electoral democracies in the world dropped from 123 in 2006 to 115 at the end of 2010, while the number of countries registering declines in political rights from 2006 to 2010 exceeded those registering gains by 70 to 47. Among the factors contributing to these declines were crackdowns by authoritarian governments on NGOs, independent media, and opposition political groups; a more assertive international posture on the part of countries such as Russia, Iran, Venezuela, and especially China; and a weakening of political will and self-confidence on the part of the world’s leading democracies. The year 2010 ended with a flurry of new setbacks, notably the brutal repression of the political opposition in Belarus following the December presidential election, the rigged resentencing of dissident entrepreneur Mikhail Khodorkovsky in Russia, and the passage of repressive new laws in Venezuela, where President Hugo Chavez assumed new decree powers.

Yet at the very moment these events were occurring, protests broke out in the Tunisian city of Sidi Bouzid after a street vendor immolated himself to protest his abusive and humiliating treatment at the hands of local officials. The protests quickly spread, and in a stunning and unexpected turn of events, Tunisia’s longtime dictator, President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, fled the country on January 14. This so-called Jasmine Revolution ignited a similar uprising in Egypt, where young activists took to the streets demanding an end to the emergency law, and in just 18 days President Hosni Mubarak was forced to resign from office after almost thirty years in power. These revolutions had a powerfully contagious effect across the Arab Middle East, and protests soon erupted in Yemen, Bahrain, Libya, Syria, and other countries.

Suddenly the world seemed utterly transformed. Whereas only weeks before dictators and anti-democratic demagogues appeared to have the upper hand in world politics, the momentous events in Tunisia, Egypt, and other Middle Eastern countries shifted the momentum in favor of democratic change in a very dramatic and unanticipated way. This shift was underlined by the democratic character of the protests—the participants were mostly nonviolent

and their grievances focused on injustices committed by their own governments rather than external forces. In this respect, these protests had much more in common with Iran's Green Revolution of 2009 than with the Islamist revolution that had brought Khomeini to power in Iran thirty years earlier. Moreover, the most striking fact about these democratic uprisings was that they occurred in the Arab Middle East, the only region bypassed by the Third Wave of democratic expansion that had swept the world during the preceding decades. After all the talk of "Arab exceptionalism" and the unsuitability of democracy for the Middle East, the Arab Spring affirmed with remarkable power the universalism of the democratic idea.

Yet the movements for democracy in the Middle East soon encountered the harsh reality of repression and the resistance of autocratic regimes to meaningful negotiations toward a peaceful democratic transition. The regimes in Syria, Yemen, and Libya (where Qaddafi finally was defeated) tried desperately to retain power by using massive force to repress opponents, while the Sunni monarchy in Bahrain, backed by Saudi Arabia, crushed the protest movement and imprisoned its leaders. Meanwhile, in late 2011, both Tunisia (where the transition had been relatively smooth) and Egypt (where it had been very bumpy and uncertain) held their first free elections. While there was reason to be concerned about the strong showing of parties whose commitment to democratic values ranges from uncertain to highly questionable, the robust turnout and successful administration of these elections were encouraging signs. There are grounds for hope that these early experiences of democratic participation are but the first step in what will be an extended process of democratic learning and growth, and NED is determined to continue its support to those who are committed to building genuine democracy and defending the rights of women and minorities.

As 2012 begins, it is too early to tell what the outcome of the Arab Spring will be, much less how it will affect the broader global trajectory of democracy. We still do not know whether the democratic recession of 2007 to 2010 has been brought to an end and we are on the cusp of a global recovery, or if we are merely enjoying a moment of democratic exhilaration in a continuing period of overall decline. What is clear, however, is that the coming years will witness a continuing struggle pitting those pressing for greater freedom against an array of forces that are determined to resist democratic change.

Arenas of Competition

There are at least four key arenas in which this competition will take place. The first is the realm of civil society, including organizations of young people and women, human rights defenders and civic educators, and independent writers and journalists. Before the Arab Spring, governments in Egypt and elsewhere in the region strove to maintain control of civil society by harassing and imprisoning activists, passing restrictive laws, sponsoring their own GONGOs (government-organized non-governmental organizations), and prohibiting or tightly controlling the work of international democracy-support groups. In this effort, they mirrored what autocratic regimes have been doing in Russia, Belarus, China, Zimbabwe, Iran, Venezuela, and other countries to prevent the kind of "color revolutions" that occurred in Georgia in 2003 and in Ukraine in 2004.

A second arena of competition is cyberspace. New communications technologies and social networks were key factors in the Tunisian and Egyptian revolutions, enabling activists to communicate rapidly with one another to spread information about human rights abuses and corruption, and to mobilize at critical moments. In response to the growing use of these technologies by human rights defenders, bloggers, and democracy activists, authoritarian governments have developed sophisticated measures for filtering, censorship, and surveillance. Autocratic regimes have also been trying to establish new international norms that would legitimize information control and warrantless surveillance, and to create "national-cyber-zones" that would give them absolute control over Internet access and domain-name registration, allowing them to target, detain, and imprison specific users.

A third area of competition is over legitimacy and political ideas. Here democrats hold a clear advantage: their principles, including free elections and individual and minority rights, are enshrined in international norms, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Moreover, opinion surveys in every region of the world show strong popular support for democracy. Because approval of democracy is so high, most authoritarian regimes today claim to be democratic and make great efforts to present a façade of democratic rule. If democracy is to preserve its preeminence in the realm of ideas, the attempt of such regimes to portray themselves as democratic must be discredited.

A fourth arena of competition focuses on economic performance and governance. Though autocratic regimes may have very little ideological appeal these days, some of them – especially China – have been able to achieve notable successes in modernization and economic growth. Since these are primary goals of most developing countries, the so-called China model may prove attractive to them unless democracies show that they too can attain comparable results. Regarding the economic and political performance of new democracies, the trends have been contradictory. Many countries that became democratic in recent decades have made significant and continuing progress in consolidating democratic institutions, maintaining steady economic growth, and delivering for their people. These include most of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, as well as other Third-Wave democracies, including Brazil, South Africa, Ghana, Chile, Taiwan, South Korea, and Indonesia.

These successes, however, have been offset by a rising incidence of democratic breakdown and deteriorating performance in other third-wave democracies. A number of these countries are highly corrupt, exhibiting poor economic performance, weak rule of law, and low state capacity. Some suffer from exceedingly high levels of violence that have worsened with the rise of international crime and the drug trade. If many new democracies cannot escape this trap of corruption, criminality, and illiberal and ineffective government, it will have a pernicious effect not only on their own people and immediate neighbors but also on the global fortunes of democracy.

The Role of NED

NED supports the efforts of democratic groups in all of these arenas and more. Since its founding nearly three decades ago, NED has been a pioneer and a leader in the field of democracy assistance. Guided by the NED Act, which authorizes Congressional funding for its work, it functions as a private and vigorously independent institution that has as its sole mission support for democracy. NED is primarily a grant-making institution, and it seeks out newly-emerging groups in both democratizing and authoritarian countries around the world, helping to empower the most effective grassroots activists. It funds programs in every kind of political environment where democracy is at issue – from closed and authoritarian systems, to countries torn by internal conflict, to countries in transition, to those working to consolidate democracy. The grants

program eschews a donor-driven approach and tries to be responsive to local capacities, needs, and initiatives. Most of NED’s grants tend to be small, and its streamlined decision-making allows for responsiveness and flexibility. It is prepared to take risks on new groups and innovative projects.

The structure of NED, with its four core institutes representing the two major political parties (the National Democratic Institute and the International Republican Institute), the labor movement (the Solidarity Center), and the business community (the Center for International Private Enterprise), encompasses the political, social, and economic sectors most critical to strengthening democracy. The institutes, in addition to having specialized expertise in their respective sectors, have the ability to link local groups working in these areas to the key regional and international party, labor, and business associations with which they are affiliated. These associations are the main international bodies that advocate democratic norms for parties, labor unions, and business federations, and that aid local groups fighting to have such norms observed in practice.

Through NED and its other grantees, these sectors are further linked with global networks of human rights and youth organizations, civic and women’s groups, independent media, and democracy research centers. In addition to being supported by NED grants, the activists with whom NED and its institutes work also benefit from a comprehensive support system specifically designed to leverage and amplify the impact of NED grant support. This includes the World Movement for Democracy, which systematically strengthens networks linking the various communities of democracy activists, scholars, and donors; the International Forum for Democratic Studies, which publishes the *Journal of Democracy*, holds working meetings and conferences, and hosts the Reagan-Fascell Democracy Fellows Program, thus providing a variety of avenues for exchange between activists and scholars; and the Center for International Media Assistance, through which media specialists and support groups share experiences and develop strategies for strengthening freedom of information and expression.

Through these and other activities, NED works to mobilize political support for frontline activists and to link them with their counterparts in other countries and regions; to connect them with other democracy-assistance institutions and to improve cooperation among these institutions; and to deepen understanding of democracy and the ways in which it

can become rooted in diverse political and cultural contexts. The cumulative experience gained over nearly thirty years is a unique asset that the NED family brings to the work of democracy assistance.

During NED's early years, hardly any other organizations were engaged in supporting democracy abroad. Since the fall of the Berlin Wall, however, the field has been expanding exponentially, and today NED accounts for only a very small proportion of spending on democracy assistance. The governments of the United States and other established democracies have dramatically increased funding in this area, largely through their development agencies but often through their foreign ministries as well. Multilateral bodies like the United Nations and the European Union have developed their own programs to support democratic development and free elections. In addition, non-governmental democracy foundations similar to NED have been created in Europe, Canada, Australia, and even in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. And numerous private foundations have become involved in aiding democracy and human rights.

As the number of countries and institutions engaged in democracy assistance has grown, a variety of approaches has inevitably emerged. Since this is still a relatively new field, there is no consensus about how the work can most effectively and efficiently be carried out. The entry of governments into the field has raised complex and sensitive questions about how democracy assistance affects, and is constrained by bilateral relations, especially in cases where host governments are not enthusiastic about democracy support. The involvement of economic development agencies has raised another set of questions having to do with the relative merits of development assistance and political aid, and how these complementary but different forms of support can be properly integrated. Still other questions have to do with the effectiveness of large bureaucratic organizations in responding to fluid and fast-moving situations and to the needs of grassroots activists in recipient countries.

A Global Perspective

Since its inception, NED has maintained a global perspective in carrying out its mission, seeking to aid people struggling for democracy wherever such support was needed and could be effectively provided. Today NED maintains a robust grants program in over 90 countries in six regions: Africa, Asia, Central and Eastern Europe, Eurasia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Middle East and North Africa.

This global perspective is also reflected in the “democracy promotion activities” that NED itself conducts—the *Journal of Democracy*, the Reagan-Fascell Democracy Fellows Program, the Center for International Media Assistance, and the World Movement for Democracy.

At times NED has been asked if maintaining a global grants program means that it must spread its resources too thinly over too many countries and regions. Our response has been that we are always making choices and allocating resources to countries where they are most urgently needed. We are aware, of course, that NED accounts for only a tiny percentage of global spending for democracy support, and we adjust our strategy accordingly. If a particular NGO receives adequate funding from other sources, or if a particular country is a priority for major international donors and NED help is not needed, NED directs its funds elsewhere. But we never arbitrarily rule out providing assistance in a country where the struggle for democracy is being waged. The fundamental reason NED maintains a global grants program is that it is a global institution with a worldwide vision and mission. As the flagship democracy-support institution of the United States, a country with global responsibilities and a population drawn from throughout the world, the Endowment is expected to be engaged in all regions. Its global perspective has helped NED to play a key role as a catalyst and convener within the community of institutions supporting democracy and as an effective organizer of global democracy networks. As an institution founded on the principle that democracy is a universal value, NED believes that it has a special responsibility to act on this principle and to show solidarity with all those who are defending democratic values and human freedom.

In addition to being geographically global, NED's grants program and other activities support and connect with activists working at every stage of democratic development (except for fully consolidated democracies, and even in these countries NED seeks to link academics and democracy-support practitioners with activists abroad). These stages are not always neatly separable, but they do fall into four broad categories, each presenting a very different context and posing very different challenges.

1) Supporting Democrats in Highly Repressive Societies: Since its beginning, NED has been committed to assisting the struggle for freedom even in the most closed and repressive societies. These are

situations in which NED has a clear comparative advantage over other democracy-assistance organizations. As a wholly non-governmental organization with no field offices abroad, it is largely immune to pressure from the governments of these countries. Over the years, it has not only assisted exile groups but also developed effective ways, consistent with the requirements of grant oversight, to provide concrete support to activists working inside the toughest dictatorships – countries such as Burma, China, Cuba, and Uzbekistan. NED will continue and, wherever possible, increase its support to democrats in such countries, enabling them to improve their access to information and to expand whatever space exists to communicate ideas, organize networks, and work for democratic change. Some of this support will help severely repressed minority populations that are seeking to defend their cultural, linguistic, and religious rights and to preserve their identity. These include the ethnic minorities in Burma, the Tibetans and Uyghurs in China, and the Chechens in Russia.

Support for greater Internet freedom will be an important dimension of the effort to aid democratic voices. NED will help pro-democracy groups gain secure and free access to the Internet, defend themselves against malware and denial-of-service attacks, network with their counterparts to share experience and tactics, and connect with donors and technology specialists who can address their specific needs. Special emphasis will be paid to aiding groups in China, which is the leader among autocracies in the development of strategies to censor and punish cyber-activists and to block the use of the Internet to expand freedom. With its more than 50,000 cyber-police, China has advanced beyond the crude filtering techniques of its “Great Firewall” of Internet censorship to more pro-active methods of surveillance and suppression, including attacks on computer networks, the enforcement of licensing and identity regulations that facilitate online monitoring and encourage self-censorship, the delegation of censorship and surveillance functions to private companies, and the deployment of proxy forces to monitor, counter, and attack cyber-dissidents and regime critics.

China’s importance to the global struggle for democracy goes well beyond its role in countering Internet freedom. China is the world’s largest and fastest-developing country, and it is increasingly deploying its growing wealth and power to support anti-democratic forces. It has become what Chinese Nobel Peace Laureate Liu Xiaobo has termed “a

blood transfusion machine for other dictatorships,” promoting its own model of autocratic capitalism as an alternative to democracy. Liu Xiaobo is correct in viewing China as a country whose freedom “is not only a matter of vital importance for the Chinese people themselves, but also a matter of vital importance for all free nations.” For this reason, NED will place special emphasis in the period ahead on supporting activists and intellectuals in China who are working to advance human rights and the rule of law, enlarge political space, and promote economic and social pluralism.

2) Assisting Democratic Transitions: During the last quarter of the twentieth century, the world witnessed a host of transitions from autocratic rule that gave birth to new regimes seeking to build democracy. Assisting these efforts was a central focus of NED’s work, and its flexible procedures and multi-sectoral structure enabled it to respond in a rapid and comprehensive way when transitions were initiated. In the first decade of the twenty-first century, however, these kinds of regime changes were few and far between, partly because many of the most vulnerable authoritarian regimes had already been ousted. The sudden fall of dictatorships in Tunisia, Egypt, and then Libya in 2011 has again brought to the fore the urgent issue of assisting the transition process, and this remains a critical strategic priority for the Endowment.

If Tunisia, whose transition is furthest advanced, can become a successful Arab democracy, it will represent an inspiring model for the region and a potential support base for movements in other countries. Given Egypt’s political influence in the Arab world and the fact that it is the region’s most populous country, the fate of its transition will also have profound consequences throughout the Middle East. The fall of the Qaddafi regime offers the possibility that civic and political forces in still another former Arab dictatorship, one that had played an insidiously harmful role in sub-Saharan Africa as well as in the Middle East, can begin to lay the foundation for a new democracy. There also appear to be realistic prospects for democratic transitions outside the Middle East, notably in two post-communist countries, Kyrgyzstan and Moldova.

Of course, transition opportunities may suddenly present themselves elsewhere, just as they have in the Arab Middle East. The fact that rulers in China, Burma, Cuba, Iran, and Zimbabwe viewed with alarm the Jasmine Revolution in Tunisia is an indication of how vulnerable they feel, for they know

that events like the uprisings in the Middle East may occur in their own countries in the foreseeable future. Indeed, similar events have already taken place in China (in Tiananmen Square in 1989), Burma (the 2007 Saffron Revolution), and Iran (the Green Revolution in 2009). Should democratic forces in any of these countries succeed one day in achieving a breakthrough, they can expect prompt and unstinting support from NED.

In countries undergoing transitions, the Endowment and its institutes seek to provide assistance in a manner that is responsive to local actors, informed by NED's long experience with aiding transitions, and focused on the long-term goal of achieving stable democracy under the rule of law. The Endowment and its institutes are well-placed to help the civic forces that gathered in Cairo's Tahrir Square and in other cities in Egypt and Tunisia to become better organized so that they can defend their gains, monitor the transition process, press for genuine reforms that check executive power and promote the rule of law, and compete effectively in elections. Party building and candidate training will be needed, along with programs of voter and civic education and the building of strong civic coalitions to monitor elections at the national and local levels.

These kinds of programs must be complemented by efforts to involve citizens at the grassroots in monitoring the reform process, defending human rights, and promoting a culture of tolerance and a commitment to democratic values. Young people have an especially important role to play in all of these areas of work, and NED will seek to support and involve them in every way possible. The development of robust independent media to keep citizens informed and engaged is also essential.

The transition will be even more challenging in Libya, where more than four decades of Qaddafi's rule have left an institutional vacuum and deep regional and tribal divisions, problems exacerbated by the prolonged conflict leading to his fall. New mechanisms of accountability will have to be built, but crucial services also will need to be delivered, especially professional policing that can provide a secure environment. It will be necessary to design a constitutional system, organize elections, and mobilize citizens with no prior experience in democracy. With over 30,000 families having lost family members in the conflict, a system of transitional justice and reconciliation will need to be established that will instill confidence in the rule of law.

Political reform by itself will not be enough. If democracy does not deliver tangible benefits for the people, public disillusionment and anger will reemerge and produce more upheaval. The answer is not economic populism, which will not produce jobs and opportunity, but fundamental institutional reforms that will reduce corruption, foster entrepreneurship, and promote changes in the educational system to raise labor productivity and provide young people with the skills needed to compete in a global economy. The building of strong and independent trade unions that give workers voice and representation at the bargaining table will also help ensure that the transition process is both inclusive and fair.

3) Aiding Democrats in Semi-Authoritarian Countries:

While providing timely assistance immediately following the demise of an authoritarian regime is crucial, NED has learned that the transition process rarely is quick or straightforward. Among the many transitions that have occurred since NED was founded, flawed outcomes have probably been more numerous than successes, and failed transitions pose a growing and formidable challenge to democratic progress. Indeed, democracy practitioners and scholars alike have become acutely aware that the path from the fall of authoritarian rule to the consolidation of democracy is a long and difficult one, often marked by retreats as well as advances. Indeed, some countries, after an initial breakthrough, regress back to authoritarianism. Others seem to get stuck in midstream and are marked by strange combinations of authoritarian and democratic features, raising the question whether it still makes sense to speak of them as being "in transition" when this seems to have become their permanent state. The experience of Russia, Ukraine, and some Latin American countries is instructive in this regard, and it will hardly be surprising if similar problems afflict the Arab countries where transitions are currently underway. Countries in this category vary considerably. Civil liberties, including freedom of the press, may be quite restricted or relatively well-respected. In some of these countries, elections are blatantly rigged or fraudulent. In others, what takes place on election day may be unexceptionable, but the electoral playing field is so tilted in favor of the incumbents that the contest cannot be considered fair. In still others, elections may be genuinely free and fair, but elected governments may not in practice enjoy full authority to govern (due, for example, to the power of the military or of criminal elements). In many of these countries, governments seek to retain autocratic power by bringing independent organizations of civil society under their control.

They do so by harassing, imprisoning, or even killing civil-society activists; by passing laws that prohibit their access to international assistance; and by establishing and supporting government-controlled “GONGOS.” In such cases it is especially important not only to provide democracy assistance, but also to encourage the exercise of political and diplomatic leverage by democratic governments to deter autocrats from closing off the political space that democracy activists require.

Because semi-authoritarian countries differ so much among themselves, it is difficult to generalize about the kinds of democracy assistance that they need. What is clear, however, is that NED must not become unduly discouraged by setbacks or overly complacent as a result of advances in these countries, but must remain committed to providing help for the long haul.

4) Helping New Democracies Succeed: Some countries that have arguably completed transitions to electoral democracy may still suffer from chronic problems of inequality, corruption, poor economic performance, weak rule of law, and abusive and unaccountable political elites. The challenges they face are monumental. In a formal and superficial way they may be democracies. But if their democratically elected governments cannot deliver for the people in terms of improved economic opportunity, health, and social well-being, they could quickly lose appeal, opening the way to populists who exploit grievances to gain power. Democratic governments need to promote economic growth and adopt effective social policies which can ensure that people at the grassroots share in the benefits. They must also promote the rule of law and educational opportunities, reduce corruption, control crime, and demonstrate that the political process is responsive to people’s real needs.

The underlying problem here is poor governance, and most of the essential work in overcoming it has to be accomplished by governments themselves. Providing assistance to governments so that they can improve their performance and combat corruption is primarily the task of bilateral and multilateral development-assistance programs. Yet NED and its institutes can help the institutions of democracy function more effectively and responsively by improving what the World Bank calls “social accountability,” meaning the ability of citizens to advocate reform, to participate in the political process, and to use democracy to protect their rights and advance their interests. The National Democratic Institute (NDI) and International Republican Institute (IRI), NED’s

party institutes, have a crucial role to play in helping political parties to aggregate and defend popular interests, connect with and respond to average citizens, and govern effectively by translating campaign agendas into workable policies. The Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE), NED’s business institute, can help train entrepreneurs in the art of building broad coalitions to achieve institutional and regulatory reform that will promote risk-taking and economic growth as well as transparency and accountability in decision-making. And the American Center for International Labor Solidarity (ACILS), NED’s labor institute, can help workers become organized and develop the political and advocacy tools to ensure that their interests are represented when decisions are made that affect their interests and livelihood.

In troubled democracies NED also can help civil society to monitor the functioning of particular democratic institutions, to diagnose the causes of ineffective performance, to propose reforms, and to build civic coalitions to back those reforms. In addition, civil society organizations can educate the public at all levels about the need for commitment to ethical standards, respect for law, and the citizen involvement and vigilance necessary for achieving good governance. NED will also seek to strengthen independent media that can report abuses and keep citizens informed about the issues and the performance of public officials.

The NED family, especially the institutes and the international party, labor, and business associations with which they are closely connected, works to improve governance and the rule of law by fostering the observance of international norms and the establishment of new legal frameworks in such fields as human and minority rights, electoral administration and monitoring, corporate governance, freedom of association and expression, and worker rights. Such norms are already embodied in the conventions and declarations of regional and international bodies, but governments too often ignore them and suffer no penalty for doing so. Through its various networks, NED will seek to mobilize popular support for these norms so that they are more prominently featured in international discussions, and governments are under greater pressure to respect them in practice.

A Comprehensive Approach

Over the years, NED has developed a broad range of “democracy promotion activities” that complement

and build upon its grants program to advance the cause of democracy. Some of these activities are carried out by specific sections within the Endowment: the secretariat of the World Movement for Democracy (WMD), the International Forum for Democratic Studies, and the Center for International Media Assistance (CIMA). NED also organizes important public events; convenes working meetings and conferences, sometimes in partnership with other institutions, to focus attention on specific issues; cooperates with the inter-governmental Community of Democracies and its working groups; and aids others active in the field of democracy assistance by sharing its knowledge and experience. These activities are intended to serve the following purposes:

1) Mobilizing Political and Moral Support for Democracy Activists: NED works to build coalitions at both the governmental and non-governmental levels for the defense of civil society. In 2008, the World Movement for Democracy and the International Center for Nonprofit Law issued an influential report entitled, “Defending Civil Society.” This report detailed the ways in which governments were increasingly imposing restrictions upon the activities of non-governmental organizations, and it also set forth a statement of principles that governments should observe in their relations with civil society. In cooperation with the WMD, NED has mobilized an international effort to call attention to this issue and rally support for these principles. The United States, Canada, and other democracies have embraced this campaign and are now providing important political support to activists who are under attack. Such work has already been effective in encouraging authoritarian governments to revise and improve draft laws, or to refrain from enacting or implementing restrictive provisions. NED and its party institutes are now working to develop an international network of parliamentarians to support these efforts. NED will also assist the mission of the new U.N. Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Assembly and Association.

In addition, NED will continue to mobilize political support and solidarity for dissidents and activists through a variety of initiatives, including its annual Democracy Award on Capitol Hill, the Democracy Courage Tributes awarded by the World Movement for Democracy at its biennial World Assemblies, the frequent Democracy Alerts issued by the WMD secretariat to mobilize support for endangered activists, the emergency fellowships provided by the Reagan-Fascell program to democrats-at-risk, and regular public forums, press briefings, and meetings

with administration officials, members of Congress, and others. CIMA works closely with the Congressional Caucus for Freedom of the Press, alerting it to journalists under threat, and NED’s institutes mobilize support for activists from their respective international party, labor, and business associations. NED plans to enhance its ability to aid democrats-at-risk by designating a staff member to coordinate its response to specific cases and to share information with other organizations working to support human rights and democracy.

NED also supplements with public events the lifeline of support that its grants provide to threatened minorities and the victims of mass atrocities. Past events have focused on the Tibetans and Uyghurs in China, the Shan and other minorities in Burma, North Korean defectors, human rights defenders in the North Caucasus and in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and journalists in Somalia. NED will seek new ways of supporting threatened minorities and the victims of the harshest forms of repression – for example, by sponsoring joint conferences and activities with the Committee on Conscience of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

2) Building Cross-Border Networks: NED seeks to build networks that help democracy activists support and learn from one another and work together to achieve common objectives. NED has long been fostering such networks through its grants program. It pioneered the practice of cross-border democracy assistance in the post-communist world, with NED grantees in Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and other new democracies providing aid in Russia, Belarus, Central Asia, and even Cuba and Burma. This approach is now a significant element of NED-supported programs in the Middle East and North Africa. Another network built through NED grants is the Global Network of Domestic Election Monitors (GNDEM), developed by NDI, which brings together 148 citizen election-monitoring organizations from 65 countries.

Building activist networks is also a key goal of NED’s democracy promotion activities. NED provides the secretariat for the World Movement for Democracy, “a network of networks” that brings together activists in different functional areas of democracy work from around the world. The WMD’s biennial global assemblies create opportunities for activists to share experiences and lessons and to build relationships of mutual support and solidarity. Its regional networks, such as the Africa Democracy Forum (ADF) and the Latin America and Caribbean

Network for Democracy (LAC Network), facilitate discussion of common concerns and effective engagement with regional bodies such as the African Union and the Organization of American States. The ADF launched a campaign to get AU member states to ratify the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance and has developed regional strategies for monitoring the Charter's implementation. The LAC Network mobilized its extensive contacts within civil society and the diplomatic community in Latin America to gain passage of a resolution on freedom of assembly and association by the OAS General Assembly.

The functional networks of the World Movement also play important roles in their respective fields. The World Youth Movement for Democracy encourages cross-border and cross-regional communication that helps young democrats to feel less isolated and to work together to build their leadership skills. The Network of Democracy Research Institutes brings together think tanks that conduct research on democracy, enabling them to exchange ideas and insights both on substantive issues and on ways to enhance the impact of their research on public opinion and public policy. CIMA works with networks of free media and connects them to donors and other support groups. It was the main organizer of the international 2011 World Press Freedom Day event in Washington and has convened a variety of other meetings aimed at facilitating discussion about the most effective ways of protecting journalists against violence and repression.

3) Strengthening Cooperation within the Democracy-Assistance Community: Despite its modest size and budget, NED is uniquely positioned to provide leadership in the field of democracy assistance. Its exclusive focus on promoting democracy, its long experience, its multi-sectoral structure, its commitment to aiding democrats all over the world, and its ability to represent the people of the United States while retaining its independence from the U.S. government – all combine to give it the standing to convene members of the democracy-assistance community and to foster cooperation among them.

NED will continue to use its convening power to bring together private foundations, publicly funded organizations, and representatives of government agencies in the United States and Europe to discuss the most effective ways to respond to common challenges, as it has recently done with respect to the transitions in the Middle East. Through CIMA, NED

will help shape the way media assistance is provided. NED is also increasing its cooperation with the Community of Democracies. In addition to supporting the Canadian-led working group on defending civil society, NED has joined with its two party institutes, the European Parliament, and the Parliament of Lithuania (the past chair of the Community) to create the Parliamentary Forum for Democracy. It is now working closely with the new Mongolian presidency of the Community on a number of initiatives. Representatives of the Community and the WMD Steering Committee have agreed to hold regular meetings with each other during their respective world gatherings and to explore new ways of cooperation to advance their common democratic objectives. Through the Community and its related networks, NED will seek to promote the fundamental democratic norms contained in the Community's founding Warsaw Declaration.

Two recent developments to which NED will seek to respond through enhanced international cooperation are: 1) the rise of new communications technologies and their increasing use by democratic activists, and 2) the growing clout on the world stage of a new group of emerging democracies. NED has made a priority of promoting the free flow of information since it assisted underground publishing and the use of fax machines during the era of the Cold War. Today a host of new technologies and social media have become central to the struggle for democracy and are being used extensively by NED grantees. NED will identify ways in which it can use its contacts with information technology specialists to help democracy activists in authoritarian environments break through Internet firewalls and evade government surveillance and cyber-police. The new technologies provide both opportunities and challenges for activists working to organize, to advance freedom of information, and to press for accountability. NED will support norms and approaches to governance regarding technology already enshrined in international law and institutions, experiment with ways of better integrating technology into its grant programs, and fund (or collaborate with) projects aimed at improving Internet and digital security.

A second new challenge is presented by the rise of younger democracies from the global south. The global economic crisis that began in 2008 has revealed a trend that had been developing for some time: The economic dominance of the advanced democracies is gradually receding, and new

economic powers are asserting their influence internationally. This includes China, of course, but most of the other fast-growing powers, including Brazil, India, Indonesia, South Africa, South Korea, and Turkey, are fairly robust and stable democracies. Yet despite their commitment to democracy at home, most of these countries have been ambivalent about supporting democracy internationally. Often they vote in international fora to support autocratic regimes, in a throwback to their “anti-imperialist” and “non-aligned” stance during the Cold War era. Given the growing divide in the world over democracy and the preoccupation of the advanced democracies with economic and other domestic problems, it would obviously help the cause of democracy if these countries were to act internationally in a manner more consistent with their domestic democratic character.

Most of these new democratic powers are no longer significant recipients of NED grant assistance, but neither have they yet become significant donors. Given their “in-between” status, they are not always linked to global democracy networks. Recognizing the growing importance of these countries, NED and its institutes plan to devote more concerted efforts to building democratic partnerships with them. We hope to encourage NGOs in these countries to become advocates for greater democratic commitment on the part of their governments, and we plan to involve their parliamentarians in the Parliamentary Forum for Democracy, the Community of Democracies, and the WMD. The International Forum for Democratic Studies, which collaborated with the Brookings Institution to convene a major conference on the foreign policies of emerging-market democracies, has already played an important role in identifying and analyzing this issue and has been developing collaborative relationships with academics and policy specialists from these countries.

4) Using Research to Improve Democratic Practice: NED is unique among democracy-assistance institutions in the importance it attaches to democratic ideas and the attention it pays to developing the link between scholarship on democracy and democratic practice. Its research arm,

the International Forum for Democratic Studies, convenes conferences and meetings, hosts the Reagan-Fascell Democracy Fellows Program, and publishes the *Journal of Democracy* (JoD). The JoD is the world’s best-known publication on the subject, and it has also generated more than two dozen books, largely drawn from its articles, that focus on key themes related to the building and maintenance of democracy. JoD books and articles are widely used in university courses around the world and have helped educate a generation of students in these matters. The Reagan-Fascell program hosts each year 15 to 20 leading democracy scholars and practitioners from around the world and encourages them to learn from one another. The International Forum also serves as the secretariat for both the global Network of Democracy Research Institutes and the Comparative Democratization Section of the American Political Science Association. With its strong links to academic specialists as well as activists, NED is well-positioned to conceive and organize meetings that examine complex and urgent problems. The International Forum recently has collaborated with NED program staff in convening meetings on how to foster successful transitions in Kyrgyzstan, Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya; how to help Bosnia and Herzegovina become a functioning democracy; and how to provide democracy assistance in North Korea in the event of a transition there. This capacity for collaborative analysis will be further developed by expanding the network of specialists that NED can draw upon to address discrete challenges as they arise.

Conclusion

As it has since its founding, NED will dedicate itself to providing concrete aid to brave people who are fighting for freedom and democratic dignity. With strategic vision and careful planning, it can also provide leadership in the global effort to advance democracy. The mission entrusted to NED by the U.S. Congress more than a quarter century ago remains as urgent and as important as it has ever been. It is true that building democracy is hard work and demands great sacrifice. But as the best means yet devised to resolve conflict without violence and to improve human well-being, democracy is worth the price.

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Supporting freedom around the world

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