

STATEMENT OF
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Introduction

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I very much appreciate the opportunity to appear before the Committee to discuss recent efforts by USAID to support democratization and good governance in Africa. As someone who has spent a large part of his career studying civil society and political institutions on the continent, and as someone who has just completed a two year tour as the Regional Democracy and Governance Advisor to USAID for East and Southern Africa, the perspective I will share with you is the perspective from the field; that is to say, what these initiatives look like when USAID seeks to put theory into practice.

Mr. Chairman. In your letter to me of February 15th, you raised six fairly specific questions which you asked that I answer during this hearing. Let me therefore turn to these questions seriatim, and then make a few summary comments of a more general nature.

1. How effective are USAID programs in support of democratization and good governance (DG) in Africa?

The answer to this question is complex, because of the nature of the exercise, and the length of time USAID has addressed itself to assisting democratic transitions on the continent. If one measures effectiveness by whether the countries in which USAID has mounted programs have made a successful transition to democratic rule, then the answer is that "it is too early to tell." It is too early for at least three reasons: First, it must be remembered that except for the initiatives pursued under the Comprehensive Anti-

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Apartheid Act, USAID has only been in the business of mounting comprehensive programs to support democratic transitions for a little over two years. These programs have thus been relatively few in number. By the end of 1993, comprehensive programs had been started in only five countries (including South Africa) in Eastern and Southern Africa. Additional programs, however, were in various stages of design or coming on stream in another five.

Second, prior to the Clinton Administration, initiatives in this area by the Africa Bureau were very much an experiment and not a series of systematic interventions in pursuit of a broad foreign policy objective. Although USAID has sponsored various forms of research on democratization since the early 1970s, virtually no programmatic activity (apart from the limited small grants program of the Human Rights Development Fund, i.e., 116(e) grants) was mounted in this area. Serious thought about what and how to go about supporting democratic transitions did not begin until 1990. The Office of New Initiatives (ONI) in the Africa Bureau which serves as the center for these programs was not established until September, 1991. The African Regional Election Assistance Fund (AREAF) was not established until mid-1992. Moreover, and this is most important, the Africa Bureau was very methodical in developing these programs, preferring not to rush into a series of interventions that were inherently risky and not well thought-out. Hence the Bureau spent a good portion of 1991 and the first half of 1992 canvassing the American scholarly community, American NGOs, African social scientists, and African democracy activists about how to proceed in this area. Because the Africa Bureau had virtually no in-house personnel with any field expertise in this area, the Bureau, its regional offices, and selected missions sought to recruit outside specialists who could begin to design and implement programs to support democratic transitions for the first time.

Third. It is also "too early" to render a definitive judgment on the effectiveness of these programs, because of their inherent nature--namely that assisting democratization and good governance in Africa is fundamentally an exercise in institution-building, and not

the occurrence or non-occurrence of single events. For example, the holding of a single multi-party election, even if free and fair, does not a democracy make--witness the recent experience of Angola, Cameroon, Kenya,² and even Zambia. Rather it is the periodic holding of elections over many years--the institutionalization of the electoral process--that establishes the foundations for an enduring democratic system. Likewise with the establishment of a free press, or an independent judiciary, or a viable party system, etc. In sum, institutionalized transitions to democracy only become apparent over relatively long periods of time--at intervals of not less than five years--and must be assessed accordingly. Moreover, if the United States is to be effective in assisting African countries in building democracy, then we must be prepared to get into the game for the long-haul -- and stay in.

Let me now, on the other hand, give you a much less equivocal answer to the question of USAID's effectiveness in this area. If one measures effectiveness by the quality of the programs USAID has initiated to date, and whether they have made a positive contribution to the process of democratization, my answer would be strongly "yes." The Africa Bureau via its own personnel, contracted personnel, and relevant NGOs have been quite effective in bringing most available knowledge on the subject to bear on the exercise to date. Few mistakes have been made in what remains an experimental exercise. Much has been learned. For example, there is a much greater appreciation today than there was two years ago about the importance of assisting the development of civil society and other key institutions such as legislatures and local governmental bodies if successful democratic transitions are to occur. We also know much more about the myriad of operational problems that must be overcome to effectively implement these programs in the field. And we know that to be effective, USAID and its partner NGOs must establish and maintain a long-term presence in the field to successfully implement their programs.

² For an elaboration of the Kenya case see my article "Kenya: Lessons from a Flawed Election," *The Journal of Democracy*, 4, 3 (July, 1993), pp. 85-99/

As a result, the activities in which USAID has been engaged in to date has been appropriate to the objective.

2. What are the range of themes that USAID attempts to address in its democracy and governance (DG) programs? Do these themes correspond to Africa's needs and to AID's comparative advantage in providing support?

USAID's DG programs cluster into roughly ^{5x} ~~five~~ areas of activity. (1) Support for transitional elections to facilitate the establishment of multiparty democracy. (2) Strengthening of key public institutions such as legislatures, the judiciary, and local government that provide a check on unbridled executive power, and which contribute to a more accountable and transparent governmental system. Support for legal and constitutional reform would also fall into this category. (3) Administrative reforms, especially the establishment of procedures within the executive branch that improve governmental performance and reduce corruption. For example, support for coordinating the activities of different ministries of government, an office of an inspector general, the computerization of the budgetary system, etc. (4) The development of civil society. (5) The establishment and/or strengthening of a free press. (6) The promotion and defense of human rights. Items 1 through 3 require that USAID work closely with the governments of countries making transitions to democracy. Items 4 through 6 require USAID to work mainly with local NGOs and private enterprises.

The specific content of the DG support which USAID provides in individual countries varies with local conditions and needs. A typical comprehensive program focuses on three to five institutions for several years. Determination of what institutions should receive support is made by first considering the widest range of opportunities and needs, and then prioritizing these options on four criteria: (1) Need given the context of the country's politics and the major obstacles to achieving a successful transition to, or consolidation of, democracy. (2) Whether there are committed local partners, in

government or out, with whom USAID can work. (3). Whether USAID can deliver the needed form of support over the life of the project. (4) Whether USAID has a comparative advantage in providing support, or whether assistance in the area in question should be left to another donor.

The result is that while USAID programs in support of democracy and governance address a constant group of themes, the specific projects mounted in individual countries are tailored to local needs and conditions. Indeed, the Africa Bureau has been very methodical in designing programs that are adjusted to local conditions. There is a clear realization that we cannot and should not attempt to do everything in each country where these projects are initiated. Rather, we should target our interventions, and focus on them for several years to achieve the desired results.

As for whether USAID has the necessary capacity and expertise to mount such programs on a sustained basis, the answer is "yes" but it is a capacity that is only now being put into place. Most important is the presence of a strong and experienced staff in the field, because the nature of these programs are such that they cannot be implemented from Washington. A typical DG project normally employs a political scientist or other social scientist familiar with both the institutional requisites for democratization and familiar with the country in which he or she is assigned. Given the highly political nature of these projects it is important that this individual have frequent access to both the director of the USAID mission and to the American ambassador. This individual must also enjoy the respect of key members of the host government as well as leaders in the private sector, particularly those who lead groups which seek and need our assistance. USAID has so far done a good job in recruiting individual contractors to serve as key staff in the field, but most of these individuals have been from American universities and must return to their institutions after a period of usually no more than two years. As the number of DG projects increases, a major challenge for the Agency will be how to recruit and develop its own cadre of specialists from within.

Staff in the field must also be complemented by the availability of specialized forms of technical assistance that can be accessed in a timely fashion. The cooperative agreement between USAID and Associates in Rural Development (ARD) has been very useful to the Bureau, but was largely limited to the design rather than the implementation of projects. The African Regional Election Assistance Fund has also been a useful arrangement for drawing on the expertise of relevant American NGOs for the purpose of supporting transitional elections. As the number of DG projects increases, there will be need for additional mechanisms of this type. Moreover, it is my expectation that separate mechanisms which draw on the specialized expertise of different groups and US firms will be required to meet specialized needs. As the new Global Bureau and its Center for Democracy is established at USAID, it may also be more efficient and intellectually sound to establish sources of expertise on a global rather than a regional basis.

In sum, USAID not only has the capacity to mount projects of the type described, but it has been the world leader in this area. While other countries are beginning to make major financial contributions to the process of democratization in Africa, none, with the exception of Germany, has committed comparable human resources to the exercise.

3. There are many U.S. governmental and quasi-governmental entities working on DG issues in Africa. Are their activities effectively coordinated? Should there be a rationalization of the roles of these various agencies and institutions?

The number of entities is actually not so many though DG is a potential "growth industry" in which many may eventually play. By far the major player at this point is USAID, but as stated previously, the number of comprehensive projects currently being implemented in Africa remains relatively modest. USAID implements these projects via its own staff (both career and PSCs), and via cooperative agreements and other arrangements with American NGOs and firms. So far, coordination has been very

effective--both in Washington and in the field. The only thorny question is to what extent these organizations should seek to establish and maintain a separate identity and independence while doing USAID's work in the field. This is particularly true when the area of work is politically sensitive, and when issues of US foreign policy may be at stake. The arrangements to date have involved a series of new partnerships in which both USAID on the one hand, and these organizations on the other, have had to develop working relationships for the first time. As the relationship has evolved and matured, there has been much learning on the part of both USAID and the American NGOs. Needless to say, this augers well for the future, as the number of these arrangements is likely to expand.

Turning now to the relationship between the Africa Bureau of USAID and its counterpart in State, and to the relationship between USAID missions in African countries and the American embassy in these countries. Because of the highly political nature of many DG interventions, especially in countries where the government resists the transition to democracy, it is essential that USAID and State maintain a close relationship. Here, the need is not so much the formal rationalization of roles, but rather the need to recognize that DG programs cannot be implemented effectively unless they are done on a "country-team" basis. A typical American embassy in Africa does not have the time in terms of available personnel, nor the administrative capacity to design and implement these programs. The question, however, is whether the embassy will support and encourage the work of the USAID mission in this field, and conversely, whether the USAID mission is eager to embark on such programs and work closely with the embassy.

From my own observations over the past two years, and from my own experience in Kenya, I concluded that where there is a relaxed working relationship between the ambassador and the mission director, there will be an effective DG program, and where this relationship is lacking, there will not. It is that simple. It is therefore important that both USAID and State appoint people to be their heads of mission who are committed to the exercise of supporting DG programs if these programs are to proceed.

Finally a very brief word about USIA/USIS. As with the relationship between the USAID mission and the embassy, it is essential that USIS operate as part of a "country team." The division of labor between USAID and USIA is now fairly clear. While the former will be the agency primarily responsible for mounting DG programs in country and has been provided with the funding and contracting mechanisms to access necessary expertise, the latter has a significant role to play through its programs of international exchange. Because a country DG project might benefit from these exchange programs, it is therefore desirable that the two agencies work closely in the field. Unfortunately, this is easier said than done. Current contracting procedures often make it very difficult for USAID to use its funds to enable USIS to implement a desired service in a timely manner (e.g. to purchase books for a parliamentary library or to arrange for a study tour to the US for a group of public interest lawyers). Conversely, as an independent Agency, USIA seeks to run its own programs without first "checking in" with USAID. There is probably no final solution to this problem other than to encourage close consultation in the field. In the final analysis, it is the responsibility of the Chief of Mission to require it.

4. Has "political conditionality" been an effective instrument for encouraging the democratic process in Africa?

Absolutely. There is no doubt in my mind that without "political conditionality," there would not be as much progress in Africa as has occurred in respect to political liberalization, an improved climate for human rights, and democratization. Countries such as Ethiopia, Kenya, and Uganda would not be where they are today without the exercise or potential threat of "political conditionality." Having said this, one must provide a more nuanced response. First, as David Gordon, now a member of your committee's staff, has argued on numerous occasions, conditionality is a blunt instrument that can be wielded once, but not indefinitely. Over time, its value diminishes, especially if (a) the leaders of a country conclude that it is not in their individual interests to embark

on reform no matter what the consequences in terms of the loss of quick-disbursing aid, and/or (b) the various donors which have suspended assistance begin to break ranks. In other words, "political conditionality" only works so long as the heat can be continuously applied.

Second, the disinclination on the part of the IMF and the World Bank to invoke "political conditionality" other than a concern for corruption, limits the ability of the United States as a single donor to make such conditionality stick. To the extent that we continue to use "political conditionality" as a criteria for assistance, we will also need to be more aggressive in making the IFIs more sensitive to our concerns and the concerns of other like-minded bilateral donors who have suspended assistance. This may eventually mean that consideration be given to suspending or reducing our contributions to these major providers of quick-disbursing assistance if they do not adopt similar criteria as the United States for extending aid.

Third, because the exercise of conditionality--whether over political or economic criteria--is a blunt instrument, it is necessary to be as precise as possible about what is required to renew assistance, and at what time, pace and, levels. Put differently, there must be the incentive of the carrot as well as the stick, and this must be articulated in a clear and unambiguous manner.

Four, the terms of political conditionality as with macroeconomic conditionality must be applied consistently from one country to the next lest the threat of conditionality lose credibility. As with the components of macroeconomic adjustment, it must be clear to all--both other donor, and other recipient countries--what the United States expects in terms of democratization, governance and human rights. Together with other donors we must also seek to develop a universal set of standards. As demonstrated by last year's convention in Vienna on human rights, this is easier said than done, but at a minimum our own standards must be known to all.

Finally, we must remind ourselves, and communicate to African governments the fact that given our limited resources, the United States cannot provide assistance to all. Nor can we spend US taxpayers money on corrupt and repressive regimes that continuously drag their feet on political reform. Invoking political conditionality, may not always bring about the desired results, but that is no justification by itself for resuming assistance.

5. How important is multipartyism to the realization of democracy in Africa?

The evolution of multiparty systems in Africa is important for the realization of democracy primarily because Africans who demand political liberalization and democratization now define democratization in these terms. Whereas it was once possible to point to "semi-competitive" single-party systems in which elections resembled primaries in many American congressional districts--for example, in Kenya--that is no longer the case. Thus, while it is possible to conceive of truly competitive and fair elections under a single-party or non-partisan format, it is unlikely that such will emerge on the ground. If this is the case, and if one believes that it is impossible to have a functioning democracy without elections, then multipartyism is the only option. Put differently, the United States has no choice than to support the development of multiparty systems on the continent.

Having said this, what does USAID do in Africa? The answer, as I believe is now the approach in the Africa Bureau at USAID, is that we seek to strengthen the institutional basis for a functioning multiparty system. This means much more, than supporting a single multiparty election. It is for this reason that in selected countries USAID has or will become involved in providing training to political parties, supporting programs in civic education and voter education as implemented by local non-governmental organizations, etc.

6. **Some African nations such as Kenya claim that the U.S. has been inconsistent and guilty of a "double standard" in its policies regarding democratization in Africa. Assess these claims.**

There is no double standard. Nor has there been a moving of the goal posts as senior members of the Kenya government sometime claim. Three additional comments, however, are in order. First, U.S. articulation of what we mean by political conditionality has evolved over time, and our statements have sometimes seemed vague. One problem in trying to articulate what we mean is that we have been very careful--as we should be careful--not to prescribe a particular form of democratic system or impose what might appear to be American defined solutions. There has consequently been some problems in communication, particularly in the late 1980s and early 1990s when our policy was coming on stream. That is not the case now.

Second, because our concern for democratization is articulated in different countries where conditions vary and where the United States may have other foreign policy objectives in addition to democratization, our concerns can be interpreted as being applied in an inconsistent manner. For example, the United States has been less vociferous in its public statements about the degree of progress towards political reform in Ethiopia and Uganda than in Kenya. Clearly, such variations, complicate the communication process, and potentially, the credibility of the policy. They may also make it more difficult for USAID to implement its DG program in the field. Some thought must therefore be given to the achieving greater consistency in the articulation of our concerns, or at a minimum, to specify the conditions when exceptions are to be made.

Lastly, it is my belief that the U.S. and other donors can do a better job of specifying the relationships between has become a "triad" of concerns--that there must be a simultaneous and significant progress towards (1) democratization, (2) economic adjustment, and (3) the reduction of corruption. As the Kenyan case has clearly shown, momentary progress on one, while neglecting the other two slows both economic and

political reform. Other countries such as Ethiopia and Uganda appear to have embraced macroeconomic reforms while pursuing democratization in a more ambiguous manner.

Conclusion

USAID has made a promising start at initiating its democracy and governance programs in Africa. While the final results from these projects will not be known for some years, specific projects have been well designed and the mechanisms for implementing these projects appropriate. Having said this, it is essential that USAID maintain a strong presence in the field if these projects are to be properly monitored and adjusted, and new projects of appropriate content come on stream. It is also essential that the Agency be given the flexibility it seeks under the proposed Peace, Prosperity and Democracy Act of 1994. Without such flexibility, including the flexibility to provide training assistance and assistance to non-governmental organizations under sections 7106 and 7107 of the proposed act, the ability of the Agency to provide appropriate assistance to support transitions to democracy in Africa, and indeed elsewhere, will be substantially reduced. As discussed in section 2 of my statement, much of what constitutes a typical country program in support of DG falls in these categories. This is especially true in countries where the regimes in power resist democratic change. It would be counter-productive not to include these important provisions in the Act.³

³For an elaboration of my views on the proposed Peace, Prosperity, and Democracy Act of 1994, please refer to my written statement of February 22, 1994 to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Subcommittee on International Economic Policy, Trade, Oceans and Environment.