



Quarterly Report
GLOBAL CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS PROGRAM
USAID Cooperative Agreement No. AEP-A-00-98-0014-00
October 1 to December 31, 2000

I. SUMMARY

During this quarter, the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) took significant steps toward revitalizing the *Partnership for Democratic Governance* (PDGS), a global information, education and development alliance that brings together NDI and three partners: *The Center for Civil-Military Relations at the Monterey Naval Post-Graduate School* (CCMR), *Seguridad Estrategica Regional para el 2000* (SER), and the *Institute for Security and Development Studies* (ISDS). Significant progress was made toward achieving the objectives outlined in the revised work plan.

Achievements this quarter include assisting SER in redesigning the PDGS website to make it easier to navigate and enhance the information available, working with CCMR to publish a series of research papers on the web; creating an educational powerpoint presentation outlining both the principles behind the work done by the PDGS and the resources it can make available to policymakers and civic actors who are trying to strengthen civilian capacity to formulate and oversee defense policy and the armed forces. NDI also engaged in a number of outreach activities and tried to foster USAID's interest in developing future country-specific programs. During this period, CCMR worked on completing some of its cases studies, began writing a series of short comparative papers, and drafted and made substantive progress on producing a civil-military curriculum, while SER worked hard to reformat and restructure the PDGS web site. Unfortunately, ISDS's contribution to the partnership this quarter was disappointing, but ISDS has agreed to submit its workplan by the end of January and to make progress on four research papers. During this quarter, NDI, with the support of CCMR, SER and ISDS and following consultations with USAID G/DG, made the decision to end the *Universidad Torcuato di Tella* (UTDT)'s involvement in the partnership.

II. BACKGROUND

The liberalization of a military or military-dominated regime does not always lead to the establishment of a stable, consolidated democracy. In many cases, the legacy of military influence in domestic political affairs leaves newly elected leaders without the expertise or institutional mechanisms necessary to assert civilian control of the military. The situation may be further complicated by the military who, viewing the new leaders as incompetent, resists attempts by civilians to assert control. If this dynamic unfolds, it can slow democratic development; in the worst case, it can catalyze attempts by the military to reassert its control over government.

In July 1998, the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) entered into a cooperative agreement with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to create a Partnership for Democratic Governance and Security (PDGS)—an information, education and development alliance to promote and support democratic governance through bolstering the capacity of civilian institutions to establish and strengthen their leadership, management, and oversight of their military forces.

PDGS programs are created and conducted with the cooperation of national legislatures, political parties, civic organizations, academic institutions, the media and the civilian elements of the defense establishment in newly emerging democracies. There are three core activities which provide resources that are available worldwide:

- The publication of a series of practical resource documents for defense policymakers in the defense policymaking community of newly emerging democracies—government officials, legislators, journalists, civic activists, academics and military officials.
- The development of a web-based governance and security clearinghouse that provides a database of laws and constitutional provisions related to defense oversight, policy directives, “white papers,” case studies and civil-military publications that can be easily accessed by policymakers in democratizing states.
- The development of an educational module based on lessons in diverse settings learned on how to establish and strengthen civilian capacity in military oversight and defense policymaking through the use of democratic processes and procedures.

In addition, workshops, consultations and programs dealing with the various aspects of establishing and strengthening a functional system of democratic civilian control of the armed forces can be organized on a country-specific or cross-regional basis in response to requests from government, political parties, civic groups, journalists and universities.

III. PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

Partnership Activities

Center for Civil-Military Relations (CCMR)

For PDGS, CCMR’s responsibilities include: collecting information materials for the governance and security online clearinghouse; writing resource papers and case studies; and developing a syllabus for a civil-military relations curriculum.

After consultations in the previous quarter, CCMR agreed to increase its responsibilities. With UTDT unable to fulfill its commitment of producing a universal civil-military relations curriculum, CCMR and NDI agreed to jointly complete this project. The curriculum is designed to give government officials, members of parliament, political party members and civic actors in

nascent democracies an introduction to various tools used by civilians in democratic states to establish civilian control over defense policy and the armed forces.

During this quarter, CCMR made further progress on writing its case studies. One of these case studies, “Assessing Civilian Capacity in Defense Policymaking and Management,” was published as a product of PDGS. This assessment framework serves as a useful tool in analyzing civil-military relations in various countries. The framework allows aspiring democrats to compare civil-military relations in their nations to those existing in other countries. In addition to the assessment framework, CCMR continues to work on other case studies and resource tools. Following editing by NDI, CCMR completed and posted on the PDGS website, the following papers:

- “Intelligence In New Democracies: The Challenge of Civilian Control”
- “Guatemala: Lessons Learned and Future Challenges”
- “Mozambique: Lessons Learned and Future Challenges”
- “The Military Role in Internal Defense and Security: Some Problems”

In addition, CCMR completed first drafts of the following papers:

- “Developing Legislative Expertise in Civil-Military Relations”
- “The Spanish Transition: Lessons Learned”

NDI is also awaiting second drafts of the following papers, having provided editorial comments on first drafts:

- "The Role of the Media in Achieving Democratic, Civilian Control of the Military in Emerging Democracies"
- “Structuring Civilian Institutions for More Effective Oversight”

NDI is also awaiting for first draft of “Lessons Learned from the Brazilian Experience”

CCMR has also agreed to produce the following three short papers within the next three to six months:

- “The National Security Framework: What do Countries Legislate?”
- “Defense Committees: Their Role and Function”
- “Defense Budgets and Civilian Oversight”

The Institute for Strategic and Development Studies (ISDS)

ISDS responsibilities in the PDGS include writing resource papers and assisting in gathering materials for the PDGS website.

During this quarter, ISDS was supposed to submit a workplan and budget for year three, complete four research papers and continue contributing to the PDGS website. After numerous attempts to contact ISDS, NDI was finally able to speak to its director, Carolina Hernandez, who

explained that ISDS's failure to contribute to the partnership's activity this quarter was due to the fact that the institute was devoting all of its human resources to: a) preventing the institute from dissolving due to lack of funds and political support in the Philippines; and b) helping mobilize support for democracy in the Philippines during the crisis occasioned by the erratic and corrupt behavior of President Estrada. NDI is sympathetic to ISDS' troubles and recognizes that part of the goal of the partnership is to provide institutional support to organizations like ISDS who work within their own regions to promote democracy. NDI did advise ISDS that it would need to make up for lapse in activity in the next quarter, and ISDS agreed to submit its workplan and budget for year three by the end of January and to make substantive progress on the four research papers it was commissioned to write.

SER en el 2000 (SER)

SER en el 2000's key responsibility is to design and maintain the PDGS website (www.pdgs.org.ar or www.pdgs.org) and online clearinghouse.

During this quarter, SER and NDI worked together in a major undertaking to restructure and redesign the PDGS website. An interim assessment of the website was conducted by an independent technical expert, bilingual in Spanish and English, who identified a number of shortcomings and offered recommendations for improvements. The assessment report identified the following problematic areas: poor navigational tools, a confounding menu page, confusing search options, and an unappealing color scheme. The consultant traveled to Argentina from November 14 through December 3 to work with SER on restructuring the website. SER worked meticulously and diligently in enhancing the credibility and usefulness of the website. The website will serve as the lasting impact of the partnership and aid civil-society groups, government officials and parliamentarians among others in their democracy-building efforts. The changes being made to the website are discussed in a trip report (an addendum to this quarterly report) by the consultant. Implementation of all the proposed changes will continue into the subsequent quarter. Currently, the new website is on-line at www.pdgs.org.

In addition to the restructuring of the website, SER continued to fulfill its obligation of posting new content, such as completed case studies, resource materials and contact information. SER is also responsible for overall maintenance of the website.

In early November, NDI sent trainer Marcela Donadio from Ser en el 2000 to give a presentation: on non-academic approaches to teaching civil-military relations and another on research methods for civil-military relations: understanding different audiences. In the presentation Donadio discussed the development of civil-military relations in the Philippines and Argentina, focusing on the importance of civil society's emergence in post-authoritarian times. Using the institutional history of ISDS and SER, she described different phases in the creation of an NGO and provided analysis and suggestions on how an NGO can develop its teaching tools and maintain its activity in the security field. Donadio's second presentation discussed the variety of ways in which an NGO can communicate with different audiences, according to the audience's specific characteristics. During this session, much time was devoted to exploring the NGO-government relationship and the responsibilities of both.

UTDT

Upon entering the partnership, UTDT originally assumed chief responsibility for developing a national security affairs curriculum based on work it initiated with a Ford Foundation grant. UTDT committed to developing a one-week training program on national defense issues for civilian leaders that would include: a syllabus; participant handbook; criteria for selecting participants; a participant evaluation; a simulation exercise; a follow-up program for trainers and participants; and administrative requirements. UTDT also committed to developing two training modules: a one-day workshop for journalists and NGOs; and a two-day workshop to train new trainers for civil-military. The education modules were to be tested in Argentina in 1998, Nicaragua in 1999 and Senegal in 2000. Following these pilot programs, the courses were to be offered to other universities and NGOs globally. CCMR was to provide substantive advice on developing these training materials and implementing the programs.

Following a second unproductive year and based on consultations with CCMR, SER, ISDS and USAID G/DG, as well as lengthy discussions with Rut Diamint and Jose Ghio, it was decided that UTDT's relationship with the PDGS would end. According to Diamint and Ghio, on entering the partnership, UTDT believed that it would be putting together a series of case studies connected to in-country training engagements that would extend over a period of several months for each in-country workshop. Unfortunately, the opportunities for these long-term engagements have not yet materialized. The PDGS was interested in involving UTDT in week-long workshops and inquired if the organization would consider altering its written product to provide shorter policy documents. While UTDT did provide two such documents, for which it received a year of funding, UTDT is not interested in continuing this type of work nor, more generally, adapting its activities to the present needs and opportunities available to the PDGS. As a result, all parties agreed that it would make most sense for UTDT to leave the partnership.

National Democratic Institute

Program Management and Review of the PDGS

During this quarter, NDI continued to reassess the PDGS. In addition to budget assessment and management, NDI strived to reallocate the duties assigned in the cooperative agreement so as to increase the number of products. After initial consultations with CCMR, NDI agreed to work with CCMR in developing a universal civil-military relations curriculum, a task originally assigned to UTDT. In the meantime, NDI continued to give extensive feedback on all of the case studies and resource papers submitted by CCMR and ISDS to date. SER continues to restructure the PDGS website according to suggestions made by NDI. The PDGS partnership has received a no-cost extension through December 2002. In late March, NDI intends to host a PDGS partners conference in Washington D.C.

Power Point Presentation

Dr. Busza's development of a power point presentation about NDI's and PDGS's capabilities in civil-military relations programming has enabled NDI and USAID to widely disseminate information about these programs. Busza made her powerpoint presentation at

USAID's annual democracy and governance workshop in Washington in December 2000 and in-house at NDI. In both instances, individuals and organizations extended their support and expressed their interest in working with the civil-military relations program.

Past Civil-Military Programs Summaries

In an effort to consolidate the information on past civil-military relations initiatives taken by NDI with support from USAID and other donors, the civil-military relations team has prepared summaries of these programs and posted them on the NDI website. This procedure allows information about NDI's civil-military programs to reach a broader audience.

Post-Conflict Strategic Requirements Workshop

From November 28 to 30, Dr. Busza and Dr. Deborah Alexander, NDI's regional director for Central and Eastern Europe, participated in a workshop organized by the Center for Strategic Leadership at Carlisle Barracks and the Department of State's Foreign Service Institute. With a diverse group of participants, including representatives from the military, state agencies, and nongovernmental organizations, the conference focused on humanitarian assistance, rule of law, civil administration, political reconstruction and economic reconstruction. The organizers were particularly interested in insights regarding NGO-military cooperation leading up to, during and following an election. The conference focused on the role of the U.S. military in post-conflict situations. For her part, Dr. Busza highlighted the importance of civil-military relations in establishing peace and order in a post-conflict situation.

IV. RESULTS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Much of this quarter was devoted to restructuring PDGS, laying the groundwork for more effective programming by the civil-military relations program, and fostering interest among USAID missions worldwide in NDI's services. NDI's civil-military relations program engaged in the following activities this past quarter:

Indonesia Programs

In August 1999, USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives provided NDI with additional incremental funding to the PDGS to conduct a civil-military program in Indonesia. More specifically, NDI was asked to conduct civilian training on defense related issues for the legislature, civilian governing officials and leaders of various political and civic organizations. The Institute was also encouraged to work on building the capacity of academic institutions and think tanks to research and analyze security policy and military reform.

In accordance with these program objectives, during this quarter NDI continued its discussions with the Aksara Foundation on providing legislative drafting assistance to DPR Commission I, conducted a second five-week journalist development program held jointly with the Dr. Soetomo Press Institute, and held a series of seminars and meetings with the University of Indonesia and Gadjah Mada University (UGM) on reforming the National Resilience Studies curriculum. The value of the PDGS global network was highlighted in this context when ISDS

sent Raymund Quilop, Assistant Professor from the Department of Political Science at the University of the Philippines, and SER contributed its director, Marcela Donadio, to assist in the Indonesian curriculum reform program. These and NDI's future civil-military program activities in Indonesia are described at length in a separate quarterly reported appended to this document.

Consultations with the National Endowment for Democracy—Equipped with a database of civil-military relations trainers, NDI offered its services to Chris Sabatini, Senior Program Officer for Latin America and the Caribbean at the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) for NED-funded civil-military programs in Venezuela and Peru. With this offer, NDI sought to unify USAID-NED efforts in the field of civil-military relations.

Consultations on Latin American and Caribbean— Busza and NDI colleagues discussed possible civil-military relations projects with OTI, the U.S. Embassies and USAID G/DG for potential civil-military programs in Peru and the Dominican Republic.

Consultations on Nigeria— Busza and NDI colleagues began adding a civil-military program to the Institute's legislative work in Nigeria. At present, preliminary discussions are being held with interested members of parliament, in coordination with USAID and OTI in Nigeria.

PDGS assessment framework—The CCMR-produced assessment framework, "Assessing Civilian Capacity in Defense Policymaking and Management," was published. In the next quarter, NDI's civil-military relations plans to publish two comparative resource papers and post on the web most if not all of the outstanding resource paper and case studies.

Web Development—The civil-military relations team continues to enhance its web pages at www.ndi.org. In addition to posting civil-military program summaries, the team is expecting to enhance the quality of the web pages. In addition, as mentioned, the team is continuously engaged with SER in redesigning the PDGS website.

V. EVALUATION

Perhaps one of the greatest challenges NDI's civil-military program faces at present is the lack of funding from USAID missions to support proposed in-country programs. Without this interest, the program's ability to conduct programs is severely limited. It is envisioned that with the redirection and rejuvenation of the global program, USAID missions will consider the importance of supporting programs to strengthen civilian capacity to consolidate control over the armed forces in various emerging democracies around the world.

VI. FUTURE ACTIVITIES

The no-cost extension through December 2002 granted this quarter by USAID will allow PDGS to complete its existing projects and proposals. In addition, the new time frame will allow PDGS to take new initiatives with remaining money.

By the summer of 2001, the PDGS will have completed and posted on the web twenty resource papers written over the past two and a half years. The PDGS will continue to improve

its website, increasing the number of on-line educational materials and resource documents available to policymakers, journalists, civil society groups, universities and political activists. During the remaining seven months of the USAID Cooperative Agreement, the PDGS will complete a one-week training manual for civilians aimed at providing them with information which will help them develop and strengthen their oversight of the armed forces and security policy.

NDI will continue to develop its civil-military program in Indonesia. Busza will travel to Indonesia in February to assess the program's activities and explore the possibility of conducting civil-military workshops and dialogues in the region. Over the next year, NDI, in cooperation with USAID's Democracy Center, will try to create openings and attract funding from both governmental and nongovernmental sources for developing projects in Nigeria, the Dominican Republic, Colombia, Peru, East Timor and Paraguay. Projects in these countries will however, depend on the availability of funding and support from the USAID missions.

PDGS Final Report
Heidi Barrachina
December 8, 2000

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Note: Sections IV and V were written to be shared with SER.

I. Executive Summary

The purpose of my trip to Argentina was to improve the user-friendliness of the PDGS website. Overall, I am very happy with the work that was accomplished. The SER team has proven themselves to be highly competent technically, and extremely motivated and dedicated to this work. By working together on a collaborative effort, we have come to a consensus agreement about the overall design and structure of the PDGS website.

Since my time in Argentina was limited, I had to focus my energy on the most important issues. These included the overall navigation structure, the Database and copyright. The Database is the most important part of the website. Unfortunately, it was also the most confusing. I spent a great deal of time on this section, in an effort to make it easy to use and understandable. Once that was in good shape, I moved onto the other main sections, such as About PDGS and Governance Today. There was not enough time to focus on other areas of the site.

We have come a long way towards achieving our objective of a more user-friendly and functionally consistent website. A new overall structure and layout has been collaboratively decided on, and implemented on the top-level pages. Now these elements must be incorporated into the remainder of the site. Implementing these design and structural changes throughout the website will be a tedious and time-consuming process that will probably take at least one month of dedicated effort. Given the fact that the SER team is working on numerous other projects in addition to this website, it will probably take longer for the full rollout to be completed. I have complete confidence in their abilities to implement this work. However, someone at NDI should keep an eye on this progress, to make sure that the changes are being implemented in the manner we decided jointly.

II. What We Accomplished

A. Color Scheme and Logo

Our first objective was to finalize the new logo and color scheme for the website. We discussed a radical change in color schemes, but in the end decided to stay with variations on the basic blue. This will facilitate the change-over to the new site, since we will be living with a combination of the old and new sites for the next few months, until the roll out is complete. The fact that the blue stays consistent provides at least one unifying element between the old and new sites.

SER has a graphics design student working part-time on the team (Cynthia), who designed a variety of sample logos to choose from. We chose one logo, and finally agreed on a color scheme that matched the blue background.

B. PDGS Home Page

Prior to leaving for Argentina, I created a mock-up sample home page and index page for the PDGS website. In response, SER created their own mock-up, incorporating some elements from my mock-up, as well as other elements from other websites we suggested. They provided several variations, which gave us a starting point for the discussion. The new home page is based on SER's mock-up, with some minor modifications.

The new logo is prominently displayed on the home page. There is also description in English of the partnership and the purpose of the website. English was chosen due to the fact that approximately 70% of web users read English. The options to enter the site in Spanish and French are also provided.

On the bottom of the home page are quick links to additional information about the PDGS Partners. The visitor is also given the option of choosing the web site (mirror) which is closer to them, US or Argentina, so they will always get the fastest possible connection.

C. PDGS Menu Page

English-speaking visitors will enter the site by clicking the Enter button on the home page. The Menu Page provides a detailed menu of the contents of the website.

We divided the website into the following four main categories:

- PDGS Database
- About PDGS
- Governance Today
- Contact the Experts

SER wanted to highlight these particular categories, because their content is the most important, and constitutes the bulk of the site. These category headings are repeated on every internal page, as buttons on the new left hand side blue navigation bar.

The Menu Page lists each category heading, with a brief text summarizing its contents. Each is followed by a drop down list, which allows a visitor to see all of the sub-categories within each grouping.

For example:

Governance Today has the following drop down menu choices:

- GOVERNANCE TODAY OVERVIEW
- News, articles and press releases
- Featured Documents
- Governance in the world

The first item on the list is always an Overview (or Intermediary) page, which provides an overview of that section. In this example, the GOVERNANCE TODAY OVERVIEW PAGE provides a brief description of the three subcategories that make up this section. New visitors will probably not know what “Featured Documents” means or what they will find in a section called “Governance in the World”. The overview page provides these descriptions.

At the same time, repeat visitors might not need the description. This system accommodates them as well, allowing them to skip directly to the information they need, without having to stop at the overview page.

We spent a significant amount of time deciding on the precise wording of the various options and descriptions on the Menu page. One of the problems that I encountered with the previous website was that the texts were often cumbersome and unclear. As it turns out, significant portions of them had been written in Spanish, and then translated into English. Unfortunately, no matter how good the translator is, such translations often end up sounding wordy or difficult. I worked with SER to develop texts that sounded perfect in English. Later they will work on developing the Spanish and French equivalents.

In addition to the four main categories, there is another titled PDGS Documents. This section contains documents produced by the PDGS.

The final section on the menu page is what they call a “dynamic area” that is meant to be frequently updated. See Recommendations.

Across the bottom of the page are several additional items, that SER considers to be less important than the others. These include: Register, Chat, Discussion Forums, and the Site Map. I had suggested that the first three could be aggregated under the category of Interact, or Participate, and given their own drop-down menu like the other main categories on the Menu page. However, they convinced me that these were really just “add-ons,” and not the main focus of the site. Therefore, they should appear across the bottom, so visitors don’t give them equal importance as the main categories on the site.

D. Internal Navigation Structure

A. Frames

Despite my original recommendation to the contrary, we decided to stay with Frames. Frames is a design technique whereby there is a separate web page, called the Frame page, that provides a constant border to all of the other pages in the site.

There are some disadvantages to such a system, which I highlighted in my proposal. However, there are also some advantages. For example, the navigation frame (left and bottom blue bars) are stationary on the page, and do not move as visitors scroll through content. Compare the PDGS pages to the NDI home page (which does not use frames), where the left hand side menu bar scrolls up and away with the content, as the visitor moves down the page.

We designed a new, and I think, much improved Navigation Frame, that will appear around every page on the site (except the home page and the Menu page). Previously, there were several variations of frames that appeared in different places on the site, was confusing.

The new frame is on the left side of the page and across the bottom. Both are dark blue bars. The one on the left side is narrower than it was on the old PDGS site, which allows the main window to be wider, and to therefore fit in more content.

B. Left-Hand Side Navigation Frame

The left-hand side bar contains the following elements, from top to bottom:

- PDGS logo. Clicking on this logo takes the visitor back to the PDGS home page.
- The four buttons, linking visitors to the four main sections of the site
- Links to the other two languages
- Button linking back to the PDGS Menu page

Buttons and Overview (Intermediary) Pages

I consider the four buttons to be the biggest accomplishment of my trip to Argentina. There was extensive debate around this issue, and the people at SER were initially quite opposed to this system. They thought that it was perfectly all right for the visitor to have to return to the menu page, every time they wanted to see a different section of the site.

As far as I am concerned, this violates every rule of website navigation and functionality. Elizabeth is in complete agreement with me on this issue. It is extremely frustrating and confusing for the website visitor to have to return to the menu page every time he wants to navigate the site.

Instead, there should be a consistent structure of navigation tools (buttons) that appear on every page, allowing visitors to reach the four main areas of the site. This was something that I absolutely had to insist on. I told them that this issue alone was the most important one to me. I knew that I had to let a lot of smaller things slide, in order to carry this important issue.

One of the things that made this issue so difficult was that the implementation of a buttons navigation system means that “intermediary” pages had to be developed. This is because the button link has to lead the visitor somewhere. This is why the “Overview” pages were developed.

For example, in the Governance Today section:

If the visitor is on any page in the website, for example somewhere in the database, they can hit the Governance Today button. The question was, which part of the Governance Today section would this button take the visitor to? There are three sub-sections:

- News, articles and press releases
- Featured Documents
- Governance in the world

To resolve this, we created the GOVERNANCE TODAY – OVERVIEW page. This is a simple page that describes the three sub-sections, and provides links to them.

SER’s concern was that a system with intermediary pages involves extra “clicks” for each user. The user hits the Governance Today button, and then gets a page with three links. They must then click again on the link they want. Every click involves additional download time for pages, and it is true that the number of clicks should be minimized. However, I pointed out that without buttons, from within the database, for example, it takes just as many clicks to get to a page in Governance Today. The visitor must first click back to the menu, and then click on their choice. Eventually, I made my case. However, it was difficult.

D. Bottom Navigation Frame

The blue bar across the bottom will appear on all of the internal pages, because it is also part of the frame. It contains the following elements:

- Copyright notice
- Register
- Discussion Forums
- Site Map
- Email Us
- Mirror Site: USA-Argentina

These items are relegated to the bottom of the page, as they are on the Menu Page, because they are secondary in importance to the main areas of the site, which are highlighted with buttons.

In SER’s original mock-up, these were only meant to appear across the bottom of the Menu page. I insisted that they appear across the bottom of all pages. Otherwise, people were very likely to never find or use them.

E. Top Navigation Bar

There will also be a blue title bar across the top of every page, but technically it is not part of the frame. This is because the title bar will change, depending on which part of the site the visitor is in (whereas the actual frame – including the left-hand side and bottom blue bars- never changes). It will always have the major category heading on the top left in red (for example, *Governance Today*) and the sub-category heading on the top right, in light blue (for example, *News, articles and press releases*). It is very helpful to the visitor, to always have a page heading and sub-heading, so that they know exactly where they are within the site. Additionally, the main category heading in red across the top (for example, *Governance Today*) will always be a link, linking the visitor back to the overview (intermediary) page for that section.

E. PDGS DATABASE

1. OVERVIEW Page

The PDGS database is a comprehensive resource containing a vast array of documents in the fields of democratic governance, security and civil-military relations. An incredible amount of work has been put into the actual contents of this database. The SER team has gone to great lengths to meticulously categorize and catalog the documents, in order to create an overall structure that facilitates search and retrieval.

Unfortunately, however, search instructions were unclear and incomplete. Additionally, the user interface was complex and confusing, unnecessarily hampering the ability of users to understand the depth and breadth of the materials. While the intent of the categorization system was to allow users to focus in on the information they are looking for in the most practical and effective way, in fact the opposite occurred.

While I was in Argentina, we invested a great deal of time into drafting complete and understandable descriptions of how the database works, what categories of documents it includes, and the various search methods available. This was a very difficult task. Each of the different search methods works very differently, and some are quite complex. We tried to come up with a way to describe each one succinctly.

The PDGS Database Overview page provides descriptions of the three Search methods available. They are listed in descending order of importance.

The first is the Thematic Search. This search allows a visitor to select one of six thematic areas, and then select further criteria within that area (such as date range, language, country, etc.).

The second is the keyword search. The SER team has assigned specific keywords to documents. Visitors search the entire database at once, by entering in keywords.

The final, least precise search is the full text search. This is similar to what most search engines on the web offer, and is not very precise.

2. Thematic Search Pages

There are six Thematic Search pages, one for each of the six categories of possible thematic searches:

- Legal and Policy Instruments
- Security and Defense Budgets
- National and Regional Experiences
- Academic Information
- Civil Society
- Library

The first five are actually categories of documents in the database, and are essentially identical. The main difference is the first paragraph, which describes the types of documents which are included in that category. I reviewed and edited all of these descriptions.

At the bottom of each thematic search, visitors are reminded that they can also search the other thematic categories, or try a Keyword Search or Full Text Search of the entire database.

a. Library

Title

I discussed with Marcela the fact that the term “Library” is not a very descriptive one. We came up with a few alternatives, such as “recommended titles” or “for further research” but did not come to any conclusions. See Recommendations.

Cover Photos

When I first saw this section, I wondered why PDGS was investing an incredible amount of time and effort, to create a web page for each book, containing a photo of the cover, and the table of contents. Not only was the photo a copyright violation, but isn't this information available on Amazon?

During our discussions, I convinced them that it would be incredibly more efficient to just link to the Amazon page describing each book. That would save them a lot of work, and avoid any copyright infringement. Unfortunately, when I sat down to search for the books, I found that few of the Amazon entries actually offered both the cover and the table of contents. Many offered neither. Therefore, we made a joint decision that PDGS would continue to create the individual pages, but without the photograph of the book cover. No links to Amazon are necessary.

3. Keyword and Full Text Search Pages

These pages describe in greater detail how each search works. I reviewed and edited both texts.

F. About PDGS

1. About PDGS – Overview Page

a. Content

This page includes several elements.

First there are links to:

- PDGS Activities
- NDI Activities
- ISDS Activities
- CCMR Activities
- SER en el 2000 Activities

Then there is an overview text, describing the PDGS Partnership. I reviewed and edited this text.

Finally, there are short descriptions of the partners, with links to the page that describes each partner in greater detail. The detailed description pages are the same ones that can be linked to from the bottom of the PDGS home page.

We did not have much time to deal with the structure and layout of this page. I find it to be confusing, and it definitely requires additional work. See recommendations.

b. Overuse of Italics

There is an extensive overuse of *italics* in the new website. Since the use of italics does not hinder the actual functionality of the site, I did not focus on this issue while I was down there. However, I find a page of text all in italics to be difficult to read and hard on the eyes. The About PDGS Overview page is an extreme example of this problem.

I am not a graphics designer. However, I have had experience working with a graphics designer, specifically, the one who designed the ILF website. She told me that in general, only one degree of “difference” is necessary to differentiate between page headings and subheadings, and between sub-headings and content text. For example, if the page heading is Bold (or in color) and in All Caps, then the Subheading could be bold, but not all caps, and the content text could just be regular text (not bold or caps).

Teresa insisted that the text needed to be very differentiated from the headings and sub-headings. For example, on the menu page, the headings are in large red print. The sub-headings are in medium-sized red print. I would make the text regular sized, black, non-italicized print. The fact that it is regular sized and not red is plenty to differentiate it from the rest of the headings. The same is true for all of the internal pages. I tried to get her to use regular (non-italicized) print, but she insisted that it must be italic to be consistent with other pages in the site. Essentially, the result is that almost the entire site is in italics. I find this very strange. I have never seen a website where everything is written in italic. While it is not a functional impediment, it does look unprofessional.

2. All Other Pages

There are a large number of pages in this section which describe PDGS and member activities. I only had time to review and edit one- the NDI activities page. This page is an index page providing a brief overview of each activity, and linking to additional information on each one.

The index page for each organization is effective. However, the structure breaks downs as one travels deeper and deeper into this section. It requires further work and review. See Recommendations.

F. Governance Today

We did not have much time to address this section together. I reviewed and edited the text on the Governance Today – Overview Page. This is an intermediary page that provides brief descriptions of the three subsections that make up Governance Today.

I also assisted with the translation of the Governance in the World- Latin America (November 2000) document.

G. Contact the Experts

1. Contact the Experts - Overview Page

Again, we did not have time to focus on this section. I reviewed and edited the text on the Contact the Experts – Overview Page. Again, this is the intermediary page, offering brief explanations and links to the three component sub-sections:

- Individuals
- Organizations
- Links to other sites

In the old website, this section only included individuals. SER had independently decided to expand it to include organizations as well.

2. Contact the Experts - Links

When I saw their proposal, the Links section was relegated to the small text menu that appears across the bottom of all pages (next to Chat and Discussion forums). I thought that this was unfortunate, since this section is quite extensive and comprehensive. I didn't want visitors to miss out on this information.

After some discussion, we decided that it could be incorporated into the Experts section. This is because most of the links are to "experts" in the field (governments, organizations, etc.). This is distinguished somewhat from the Contact the Experts - Organizations section, because that section will offer PDGS written descriptions of the organizations listed (ideally followed by links). I imagine that there will still be some overlap, but that's OK.

G. The Remainder of the Site

We did not have time to review the remainder of the site:

- PDGS Documents
- Register
- Site
- Discussion Forums
- Site Map

III. Progress on Objectives

IV. Agreed Upon "To Do List"

- Remove all photos of book covers (or request permission)
- Change drop down lists on Thematic Searches to exclude options that will generate no results
- Add "Reprinted with Permission from" (Jakarta Post, Naval War College, etc.) at the bottom of all documents.
- Make all links to external websites open a new browser window, not within the PDGS frame. This applies to both articles (CNN, etc.) and links to external organizations, etc. (Links page, experts). Never open an external website within the PDGS frame. This is a potential copyright violation.
- Eva is sending an updated bio for Bill Nash, keep him as an expert.
- Add Eva as an expert, her bio is on the NDI website (Civ Mil Team, under Programs).
- Top navigation bar- make sure all red headings link back to the appropriate intermediate page. Some of the Thematic Search pages, for example, do not have the link.
- Make sure all pages have appropriate page titles (in the HTML code). Visitors see the page title across the top when they print the page.
- Remove all photographs of book covers (or else request written permission from the publishers, artists and photographers).

V. Recommendations (To Be Discussed)

Thematic Search pages

Add a drop down menu to the other thematic search categories at the bottom, instead of directing the visitor to the database button on the upper left menu. I don't see why the visitor should be forced into this extra step. They should be able to navigate directly back and forth among the thematic search pages, without having to go to the Database Overview page every time.

I would not ask the user to "click on database button to left". If we cannot reach an agreement on including a drop down menu, at least we should offer the user a link right there at the button, not refer them over to something else on the left.

Language

We suggest using the term “Spanish” instead of Castellano. Many English-speaking visitors do not know what “Castellano” means, and may not refer the site to their Spanish-speaking colleagues, since they do not know that Spanish means Castellano.

Italics

There is an extreme overuse of italics on this website. I would never expect to see an entire page of text in italics, as we have here. One major example is the About PDGS overview page. I find this painful to the eyes. I have never seen a website with so much italics.

Buttons

Add a PDGS documents button on the navigation bar for internal pages. Right now, the only way to access these documents is via the Menu page. All other options are available on both the menu page, and on the blue navigational frame that surrounds all internal pages.

I would put the PDGS Menu button directly below the other four buttons on the navigation frame. I think it looks strange standing apart. Maria Teresa thought that it should not be next to the other four, since those are the four main website categories, whereas the PDGS Menu button is a “navigation aid.” In my mind, all buttons are navigation aids, and the 5 should be together. If you look at the Carnegie Foundation website, you will see that on the internal pages, they also have four buttons leading to the four main categories, and a home button, and all five are lined up together.

Menu Page, What’s New

SER wanted to include summaries of top news stories in the field, and originally included a photograph (from an on-line newspaper?). I suggested that this section be reserved for “What’s New” on the PDGS website, not necessary, “What’s New” in the world in this field. News articles always run into copyright issues- the summary would have to be written by someone in the Partnership, and probably no photograph (unless permission is requested from and granted by the photographer).

Top Navigation Blue Bar

The red heading at the top should always link back to the intermediary (top- level) page for that category. For example, the list of “News, articles and press releases” has the blue banner across the top. First it says in red “Governance Today” which is the heading for this section of the website. That heading should always be a link back to the Governance Today- Overview page. To the right of the red subject heading is the sub-heading for the section. In this case, it is News, Articles and Press Releases” in light blue. All of the light blue sub-headings should have the first letter capitalized. This is not being done consistently throughout the site.

Keyword Search page

Elizabeth suggested that all keywords should be listed, so that visitors don’t have to

just guess. I agree that this is a good idea. We need to find out from Marcela how many there are. We could at least leave out the country and people names.

PDGS Database - Library

I recommend that this section be called something more descriptive than “Library.” Too much work has been invested to risk the possibility that visitors might just skip over section.

Visitors see the term Library twice- on the PDGS Database drop down list on the Menu page, and again on the PDGS Database- Overview page. In neither location is it described in further detail- nor is there space to do so. Once the visitor clicks on the word, they are taken to the Library thematic search page, where there is a small text describing the contents. I reviewed and edited this text.

An enormous amount of work has been put into this section of the website. It is a truly comprehensive guide to books in the field. Unfortunately, I am concerned that visitors will not find the term “library” sufficiently enticing to draw them into this section. There should be a short term or phrase that is slightly more concise, but that still fits on a drop down list.

About PDGS – Overview Page

We didn’t have much time to organize this page properly. I find the current structure and format to be confusing and unclear. For starters, the title in the center of the page says “PDGS Activities.” That is unclear, because it is not in fact a title for that page, but rather a link to another page, titled PDGS Activities.

About PDGS- Activities pages

All of these pages need to be reviewed and edited. Additionally, the format needs to be addressed.

The first page in each section is a menu list of activities. Clicking on each activity, the visitor can access additional information about each one.

The blue submenu across the bottom should be improved, to make it more clear to visitors that there are additional choices. The color should match one of the blues from the PDGS logo. The dark blue header bar across the top should appear on all pages. I would put the lighter blue submenu immediately below that one.

Governance Today – Overview Page

The text is fine, except it should not be in italics. The Subheadings are large and in blue font- that is more than enough to differentiate them from the text itself. In fact, they should be a bit smaller, since at the moment they are as big (or maybe bigger) than the red page heading at the top (Governance Today). The first blue sub-heading should be adjusted so that the capitalization matches the other two subheadings.

Since this is a short page, the light blue page now abruptly ends half way down the page, and is followed by a large chunk of dark blue background. The HTML page with the content should be extended (with blank space at the bottom), so this doesn’t happen. The Experts Overview page has the same problem.

News, articles and press releases:

I would definitely put the two date categories right at the top (2000, 1999). Right now the link to the 1999 articles is hidden all the way down at the bottom of the list. When I click on 1999, that page has the sub-heading “Featured Documents” which is incorrect.

I would not put the article titles in ALL CAPS. It is not necessary.

Contact the Experts - Organizations

Almost none of these links work at the moment. Will they link to the external website directly, or to a PDGS website page describing the organization?

Intermediary pages – blue?

I would not make these blue. I think it is confusing for the viewer to suddenly see a new background color. It takes away from the overall consistency, look and feel of the site. However, it does not affect functionality, and Teresa really likes them that way.

Contact the Experts – Links

When Eva was in Argentina, we discussed the issue of links to commercially sponsored websites. We decided that it would be OK to include such links, so long as there was a clear disclaimer, such as:

The following links are provided for informational purposes only. The PDGS does not endorse them, nor can it vouch for the accuracy of the information provided.

I'm not sure how this new section would fit into the current structure, which is divided geographically.

VI. Conclusions

We have accomplished almost all of our major objectives. What remains are the smaller, detail-oriented elements that differentiate a good website from a great one. We need to make sure that all of the design and structural designs that we have made together are carried out and implemented throughout the entire site.