

USAID Office of Democracy and Governance



2002 Partners Conference Report

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Plenary: Priorities for Democracy Assistance

9:00-10:00 Thursday, December 5, 2002

Speakers:

Jerry Hyman, Director, USAID DG Office

Roger Winter, Assistant Administrator, USAID Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance

Lorne Craner, Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, Department of State

Jerry Hyman welcomed the participants, partners and DG officers from the field and Washington, and stated that the themes of the 2002 Partners Conference were "Failed and Failing States" and "Pluralism, Democracy and Governance in Islamic Societies."

Roger Winter began the plenary by thanking Gail Lecce for her excellent work as acting director of the DG Office and the USAID DG staff for their commitment and effort. He stated that the American experience of democracy, encompassing adherence to the rule of law and peaceful transition of power may, at times, appear naïve to citizens from countries without a strong rule of law or sustainable peace. Nonetheless, USAID and its DCHA Bureau are committed to democracy, operating under a belief that people, and not just institutions and elected officials, are at the forefront of constitutional democracy. The current Administration shares this commitment to DG as expressed by the White House's National Security Strategy, released in September 2002. The strategy's first objective states the importance of championing the aspirations for human dignity. Also, the establishment of the Millennium Challenge Account provides an affirmation for democracy and governance as benchmarks for development. Winter emphasized that USAID Administrator Andrew Natsios is a strong supporter of incorporating governance into other Agency programs and that DG stands very high in the overall programming of USAID. The Agency's DG funding trajectory is positive and is approaching one billion dollars annually. USAID is also engaging predominantly Muslim societies, as exemplified by Afghanistan initiatives, and is trying to clarify and revise some of its current policies, including rules of political parties assistance, police assistance, and anti-corruption programming.

Winter discussed the newly completed re-organization of the USAID/DCHA Bureau and the connections among democracy, humanitarian assistance and conflict as expressed in the bureau's mission and the vision statement. He emphasized that the challenge of addressing failed and failing states undertaken by the bureau will run throughout DCHA and will inform ways of addressing disasters in the framework of democracy, conflict, and humanitarian assistance. However, this refined approach will not preempt the bureau's current programs. As a history of disasters indicates, there is a connection between failed governance and crisis, humanitarian emergencies, and other disasters. Winter pointed out that there is also a need to look at humanitarian assistance from a governance perspective. While humanitarian assistance is necessary to keep people alive, long-term solutions need to be developed to address the issues leading to humanitarian emergencies. For example, even natural disasters have a connection to governance as demonstrated by ways the relief efforts are conducted.

Winter said that in USAID's experience failed and failing states contribute heavily to humanitarian disasters. Therefore, placing democracy and conflict in one bureau is not accidental; it underlines a linkage between bad governance, violent conflict, and humanitarian disasters. These issues are of particular interest to USAID since two thirds of the missions are in countries experiencing conflict in the past five years; moreover, there are numerous USAID humanitarian assistance programs in non-presence countries. Winter concluded by discussing

two examples (Sudan; Zimbabwe) where, in both cases, the reason for a continuous need for assistance and the growing desperate situation is poor governance.

Lorne Craner re-emphasized the Administration's commitment to democracy. He said, that with 25 years of experience, State's Bureau for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL) work in democracy programming and support has reached an important milestone. The nations comprising the Community of Democracies have grown to over 100 members. The past two meetings of the community in Seoul, South Korea, and in Warsaw, Poland, demonstrated the remarkable progress of democracy as exemplified by the recent histories of the two host countries. Increasingly, democratic values are perceived as universal and there is evidence that democracy is not a foreign imposition but an expression of will and want of the people.

Craner continued by saying that the post-September 11th situation is an opportunity for the United States to show its commitment to democracy, human rights, free market, and free trade. Craner, then, turned his focus to the Administration's commitment to human rights, in particular in the Middle East. Although, the contemporary state of human rights in the Middle East is deplorable, Secretary of State Colin Powell has a positive vision for the region. The September 11th tragedy provided an opportunity for better understanding of differences within the region. Craner cited Bahrain and Morocco as examples of positive change, but he added that challenges remain as evidenced by the worsening human rights conditions in Egypt. In central Asia and in the former Soviet republics, the initial hopes and expectations for change and democratization have been slowly extinguishing through the 1990s. The record of respect for human rights is, at best, mixed. In Uzbekistan, abuses persist despite limited changes. In Tajikistan freedom of the media has increased, but in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkmenistan human rights are in dire straits. It would be easy, noted Craner, to side-step human rights and focus on security, but the president and secretary of state are committed to human and political rights and continue to press for them. Similarly in China, where for the first time, DRL is working to assist independent groups in bringing changes to the closed political system. Finally, in countries like Colombia and Guatemala, DRL and USAID are engaged in safeguarding democracy and strengthening open societies. Working with the understanding that commitment to human rights and democracy requires a long-term dedication, the Administration expresses solidarity with the courageous people all around the world who champion democratic change in their countries.

In the discussion period following the presentations, Craner was asked about the conditionalities of foreign aid and synergies between aid and security packages. He replied that some countries, such as the central Asian republics and Pakistan, received a message indirectly by being denied an invitation to a Community of Democracies meeting in Seoul. Other countries, Kyrgyzstan and Egypt for example, were informed about specific conditions linking aid to the improvement of their human rights record. Craner also expressed satisfaction with various governments agreeing to link security and assistance to the delivery of human rights.

In a follow-on question, Winter was asked to comment on the definition of a failed state. He replied that a state fails when it does not view all of its population as citizens but denotes some of its people as enemies. He added that a successful state respects the human rights of all of its citizens and sets aspirations for them. A final question inquired about the policy of assistance to the police. Hyman said that an intra-Agency group is working on the issue and that the policy of prohibiting assistance to police, dating back to the 1960s, is under review. He added that human rights groups are increasingly interested in working on police reforms.

Plenary: Evaluating Democracy Assistance

10:00-12:00 Thursday, December 5, 2002

Speaker: Jerry Hyman, Director, USAID DG Office

[Note: The following is a transcript of Jerry Hyman's speech given at the plenary]

Instead of our usual panel of thoughtful speakers addressing broad trends or hot topics in this first session of our partners conference, we decided this year to ask you to engage with us in a serious conversation, first in plenary and then in breakout sessions, about a long-term comprehensive evaluation effort we propose to undertake over the next few years.

In one sense, we believe the DG community—all of us here today—is at the cusp of two challenges, the first of which we think we have met and the second of which we propose now to begin.

The first challenge was to establish democratic governance as a core element of the development effort in general. Almost 20 years ago, when we first began to mount comprehensive, integrated DG programs, the resistance was formidable. To development professionals, democracy programming was worse than a misappropriation of development resources. It was counter-productive. It threatened—in fact it intended—to entangle development efforts in "the internal political life of a country." Instead of providing "neutral" assistance in the vital effort of reducing poverty and misery, it would align us in the political game itself, favoring some political actors against others, as if the structural adjustment programs of the IFIs were either non-intrusive or non-political, as if political interests and arrangements were irrelevant to economic systems and the requirements for changing them.

I recall quite clearly a meeting of the USAID DG Sector Council with the general counsel of the World Bank. We broached with him the possibility of cooperation between AID and the bank on certain kinds of DG projects. He wished us well but assured us in no uncertain terms that no such cooperation would be possible. The bank's charter, he noted, was quite explicit that it "shall not interfere in the political affairs of any member; nor shall it be influenced in its decisions by the political character of the member or members concerned. Only economic considerations shall be relevant to its decisions, and these considerations shall be weighed impartially in order to achieve the purposes stated in this agreement." Now, a dozen years later, there is no area of democracy work—with the possible exception of elections and political parties—in which the bank does not have extensive programs. Certainly, it is engaged in governance reform, decentralization, building a rule of law, opposing corruption, and even supporting the development of civil society. The bank is now no more concerned about intrusion into the "sovereign" competence of the member states for these programs than for any of its economic programs in which budget deficits, monetary policy, interest rates, the quality of the currency, the privatization of public assets, and the ownership of enterprises are areas in which it imposes detailed requirements. Indeed the economic and the governance programs are connected, as good governance is now thought by the international financial institutions themselves, to be critical to sustainable economic development. In short, there is now no serious donor that remains detached from at least some elements of DG work. The question now is whether, to what extent, and how they will remain engaged.

Which brings us to the second and current challenge. If the theoretical and ideological suspicion of, even hostility to, DG work—the first challenge—has been met, the practical one has most emphatically not. There remains, both within the community of practitioners and analysts, profound uncertainty about the efficacy of democracy assistance. Absent any real integrated general theory of democratization, certainly any consensual one, it is hardly surprising that there

is no derivative applied theory. We do not really know with any degree of certainty—and based on empirical evidence—what works and what does not, what works better and what works less well, in any particular context, or in general for that matter. In the main, we have been left to depend on vague generalizations—slogans even—based as much on hope as experience: work on the demand side where there is insufficient political will to work on the supply side; mobilize civil society advocacy groups in authoritarian environments to pressure for change; don't impose American models; adapt programs to the local conditions; indigenize the effort; recall that Rome was not built in a day and our democracy is still perfecting itself after 200 years; stay the course; things go better with Coke. Some of these are bromides, some are truisms, some are the beginnings of a strategic approach. Almost all are heard regularly at our country reviews or are included in formal program evaluations submitted to us under contract. None of them are objectionable, but none of them help us very much either. None are hard lessons distilled systematically from our collective experience. None of them assist us to avoid dead ends, to sort out what to do next time, to glean what is more likely and what is less likely to work.

The alternative to these generalities is usually a more narrow, technical sub-set. It begins with the assertion that there can be no vibrant democracy without X. The X consists, at one level, of free and fair multiparty elections, good accountable governance, vibrant civil society, a rule of law with respect for human rights, and so forth. At a second level, the Xs consist of yet further subsets: an effective responsive electoral commission, coherent democratic parties, decentralized accountable local governments, civil control over the military, effective national and local legislatures, non-corrupt national governments, vibrant pluralistic but professional print and broadcast media, tax-free advocacy NGOs, effective independent bar and judicial associations, and so on. The list gets very long and it keeps expanding.

Even if all of this were true, it is, again, not altogether helpful. First, it tells us nothing about priorities or sequences. If anything, it leads to the prescription to do a little of everything, no matter what the local conditions or how small the budget, because every one of these is unarguably a piece of good democratic governance. More important, this sort of institutional checklist approach will simply not survive either the bureaucratic or the substantive test of time.

Finally, even if either of these approaches were bureaucratically viable—and they are not—neither represents the approach of a mature sector. Neither the economists nor the health specialists nor even the environmentalists debate their paradigms like this, based on general adages instead of systematic data. Over the years, there has been heated debate between economists, for example, about the essential components of economic growth and, consequently, over the best way to assist it. Several paradigms have seen temporary supremacy and retain, even now, their respective champions. What is the best approach for donors? Do we fill the investment gap? Provide debt relief? Fund human capital development through education? Support policy dialogue? Negotiate structural adjustment? Concentrate on entrepreneurship and competitiveness? No doubt all of these are necessary and no doubt we need to stay the course. But what should the course be? It is not—it cannot be—a simple list of all the attributes of a developed economy. It is necessarily the product of a debate based on evidence and experience. The constant interpretation and reinterpretation of that experience, however passionate, is what the debate needs to capture. But an endless series of self-serving aphorisms cannot be the measure of a mature sector.

I put it to you today that we need to get past our birth. We have met that challenge. We are an established sector. We need to start acting like one. A mature sector needs to be self-reflective, self-learning. It cannot be paralyzed by complaints about the complexity of democratic change or how hard it is to measure results or how unsatisfactory it is to compare political experiences

between different, inherently idiosyncratic countries. Notwithstanding these difficulties—all of which apply as well to economics, for example—we need to begin that systematic learning. No matter how obvious that politics is an essential ingredient of development, and no matter how deep the commitment to extend democracy as an element of our foreign policy, no attempt to program for democratic governance can indefinitely survive scrutiny about results. We simply cannot make claims on the national treasury based on noble aims and good intentions.

If we do not have an applied theory of democratization, we will need to turn to the second-best option: our own experience. We will need rigorously, even ruthlessly, to examine the past nearly two decades to extract, as best and systematically as we can, what seems to have worked better for us and what seems to have worked less well. Will these lessons be conclusive? No, they will not. They will remain tentative, even hypothetical. They will be contingent on our continuing experience. No doubt there is a danger of premature decisions based on insufficient experience or misinterpretation.

The alternative, however, is no longer acceptable. We are under external as well as internal pressure to come to some conclusions or at least some hypotheses, however contingent and tentative. Externally, USAID's Bureau for Policy and Program Coordination and the Office of Budget and Management have been very clear that we need to distill and explain our results, both over the long term and incrementally. But external pressures should not be driving us. We should be driven, rather, by our own commitments to democratization itself. Endlessly repeating sub-optimal programs will continue yielding sub-optimal results.

The DG Office has begun that effort. We have been thinking about this project for at least two years. We have begun to design two dimensions. First, we want to look at country programs, comparing similar country and program characteristics. Second, we want to look at the DG sub-sectors: rule of law, civil society, governance, and elections. In each case, we will be comparing the experiences and apparent results. We have not yet finished even designing this effort, which will in any case take two to three years at best. But we have begun, and we feel some urgency in pushing toward implementation.

The results, to repeat, will hardly be conclusive. We intend to be rigorous, both substantively and methodologically. We intend to be thorough. Still, no matter how rigorous or thorough, there will be debate about the imperfect, less than airtight methodology we will necessarily be employing. There will be plenty to argue about as the evidence comes in. But as in economics or health or environment, we will need to begin to reach some tentative conclusions, always contingent on further experience.

Those tentative conclusions will nevertheless have programmatic implications. That is their purpose. And we may draw the wrong conclusions from our imperfect data. But, we cannot wait for a perfection that we will never achieve, and, one last time, we cannot just keep going down an institutional checklist of constantly expanding programs, and we cannot keep going decade after decade without examining our experience.

We need you to realize that, as this program moves from design to implementation, there will be teams of some kind appearing in this or that country asking questions about—indeed evaluating—programs with which you have been closely associated. These questions will not be evaluations of this or that grant or contract, and they will certainly not be evaluations of a mission's DG programs. They will be part of the global sector or country evaluations, looking backward at what we did and why and how well it seems to have worked. But there is no way to evaluate our experience in a sector without including the particular interventions we have

sponsored there. USAID works now almost exclusively through grants and contracts: through you. USAID itself provides very little direct technical assistance. We—you and we—are implementing these programs together. So there is no way to evaluate our own developmental experience without evaluating yours as well. They are the same. We understand full well that you have all undertaken evaluations of your own experiences, however formal or informal. We welcome your conclusions. In your experience, what has worked well and what has not worked well? What would you repeat and what would you eliminate if you were asked to construct a new program in a similar socio-political environment? There is more than enough room here for everyone to join in.

We have engaged together over the past two decades in a great and systematic endeavor to expand the horizons of human rights and human dignity. The extension of democracy is one of the great political advances since the end of the 18th century. We, here in this room, have been graced with the opportunity to provide meaningful assistance in that great effort, to help those who assert the right of people to choose their leaders, to constrain their discretion, to hold them accountable, to enjoy personal security under a rule of law and the respect for human rights, to express their views freely and without fear of retribution, and to enjoy associational life with the right to organize for and advocate. We have been allowed to work on a full-time basis to advance the cause of human liberty and human dignity. We get paid for that. In doing so, we are the trustees and the agents of those around the world who cherish liberty and democracy and, in particular, of the American taxpayer. Trusteeship is a fiduciary duty. It is the highest duty with the highest standards of performance imposed by the common law. In rising to that challenge, we need to approach our duty with a mixture of idealism and realism. We need to return to the American people and to those who share our commitment to liberty, our best efforts and our best judgment irrespective of our personal interests and passions. In the end, we may find that we fall short of our own aspirations. We may find that external donors cannot really provide make a meaningful difference to this great cause. I believe the jury is still out on that.

But whatever the final verdict, we intend to go forward with a mixture of idealism and realism: idealism that we can truly make that difference and that the cause of liberty is in our hands; realism that we need to examine and reexamine our performance in the cold light of day, not just the candle of optimism. That is the effort we intend to launch.

We ask you, today, to help us through this effort. We ask today for your counsel and advice. We ask you to join in a conversation about that endeavor, now with a plenary session and then break-out sessions, to get your initial responses, recognizing that a discussion like this can hardly begin, let alone conclude, in an hour or a morning or even a few days, and recalling that we are still in the design stage. But we would like to begin. We intend to begin.

Plenary: Evaluating Democracy Assistance

10:00-12:00 Thursday, December 5, 2002

Breakout Session: Rule of Law

Moderator: Patricia Alexander, USAID DG Office

Patricia Alexander opened the session by posing several questions on the research agenda (SORA) Jerry Hyman introduced in the plenary and the rule of law (ROL) sector. First, why are these issues important to discuss? Are there alternatives to being categorized in the ROL sector? Should SORA be done sector by sector? Second, at what level do we expect to be able to know what works and what does not? ROL is a broad field and if SORA is to be different from past evaluation work, do we cover the breadth of the ROL field or will this compromise our ability to get into specifics? Third, what conclusions have our partners already reached and are there already hypotheses out there to test? Finally, Alexander called attention to *Achievements in Building and Maintaining the Rule of Law*, which she characterized as a first step of the SORA process in the ROL field. She then opened the session up for discussion.

Much of the discussion focused on definitions of ROL and methodological questions. On the question of definitions, one participant posed the question of whether ROL should be considered as an instrument to some other end or as an objective, or end, in its own right. She emphasized that ROL successes play a significant support role for programming in other sectors outside of DG as well as being successes in their own right. The participant suggested that DCHA/DG should address both functions of ROL programming when evaluating successes and failures. Another participant pointed to the evolution of work in the ROL sector, and with it a gradual change in what we mean when we talk about the field. At first, programs addressed human rights issues and the justice sector and then gradually moved into other areas. Other participants agreed with that the ROL sector is crosscutting and ought to be understood and evaluated as such. Nevertheless, one participant highlighted the problem that the ROL sector is fraught with limitations on a functional and institutional level and pointed to the lack of good baseline data to use in conducting evaluations.

On the issue of methodology, a representative of an intergovernmental organization described his agency's approach to evaluating its programs. His organization had contracted with outside social science researchers to devise a new evaluation methodology because they felt that their own methodologies were weak and that they lacked the expertise internally to come up with an effective methodology. He suggested that USAID might also get some outside help from social science researchers in devising a methodology for SORA.

Another participant raised the problem of looking at ROL and devising programs through the lens of western experience and pointed to a need to take more account of the dynamism of the societies where we work. He suggested more cooperation with social scientists to benefit from a wider perspective and avoid a narrow cookie-cutter approach to programming. The participant also suggested that the perceptions of those in the places where we operate are as important as our project designs. Anthropologists, he felt, have more innovative approaches to getting at the question of what determines people's behavior which ought to be accounted for in devising programs and conducting evaluations. Another participant countered, noting that there were also problems in using an anthropological approach to define a methodology.

Another participant felt that the many of the most important questions were not being asked or addressed with regard to USAID ROL programs. He expressed the opinion that USAID took a very mechanistic approach to its work, tinkering in an ad-hoc fashion with the various actors in

ROL sub-sectors with the faulty assumption that it would all come together and eventually work out on its own. He gave the example of USAID work in some former communist countries where he felt that programs were put into place without addressing the prerequisites for these programs to succeed—in his opinion, the need for a populace that has a basic education in why these issues matter at all. Without people debating or caring about the issues, all our efforts will be for naught, he said. He closed by suggesting that gauging public opinion, perhaps through focus groups, should factor into SORA's methodology. Other participants also focused on the compartmentalization of actors, including other donors, doing ROL work and the need for increased coordination and taking a broader view if a positive and coherent outcome is to be achieved. One participant expressed a concern that indigenous NGOs needed more support.

The discussion then shifted to the question of SORA's usefulness. Several participants expressed the concern regarding the danger that SORA could be perceived as "just another study," and that studies were a luxury in the face of scarce resources. The critique followed that there were "a million assessments" and too few resources to actually run programs. Several participants expressed their opinions that SORA must really offer something new and different if it is to be regarded as a useful contribution. Some suggested that the DG Office go through the old files carefully so as not to duplicate what has already been done before going out to the field. Other questions along these lines included: Who is the audience? What is the purpose? Is it really demand driven?

Other concerns that participants voiced regarding SORA's methodology included the need to take the work of other donors into account to avoid skewed findings; the need to get away from the "broad but shallow" assessment syndrome; and the need to avoid objectives that are too lofty that tend to set projects up for failure before they have even begun.

Plenary: Evaluating Democracy Assistance

10:00-12:00 Thursday, December 5, 2002

Breakout Session: Civil Society

Moderators:

Gary Hansen, USAID DG Office

Carol Sahley, USAID DG Office

Gary Hansen began by stating that this was an opportunity for the civil society division to get feedback from our partners and initiate a discussion with them. Carol Sahley stated that there has been little focus on the link between context and impact in the assessment of USAID civil society programs and we need to look at what tools are most successful in a particular context and which strategies have not worked. Instead of approaching SORA only through single case study approaches, the DG Office wants to use systematic and comparative approaches in different countries and then proceed to draw standard systematic conclusions. The DG Office also wants to be careful about differentiating levels of impact starting with the organization level of the civil society organizations (CSOs) we support to the contribution of democratic consolidation. Three questions guided the discussion. How do we define success for civil society programs? What are the key questions or issues the study should address? What resources are available for us to draw on? Sahley and Hansen then opened up the floor for questions.

An audience participant drew on his experience of working on a USAID evaluation that supported the early establishment and development of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Bosnia. In terms of defining success, the first approach he and his colleagues used was to focus on CSOs that drew attention. Women social workers in Bosnia started the first wave of NGO establishment and development. USAID evaluated these NGOs in terms of their objectives. The evaluation's broader objective was to look at USAID's intention to create civil society in Bosnia and the approaches used to make it work. The accomplishment of this objective was much more problematic than simply identifying the objectives of Bosnian NGOs. In the Agency's attempts to change a whole community in an ethnically mixed population, it realized it needed a critical mass of support for NGO establishment, development and the larger goal of civil society enhancement. Bosnian citizens were generally pleased with the presence of NGOs working towards reconciliation, but they were not strong enough to mobilize receptivity amongst the overall population.

Another participant stressed the need for SORA to have an established framework and clear mechanism. As for measures of success, we should look at whether CSOs exist as sustainable agents of advocacy and have high standards, and if civil society has an effective advocate for policy change to differentiate civil society programs from other programs. Participants agreed, stressing the need for programs that would focus on ensuring that civil society meets its responsibilities.

A member of the audience stated that it seemed like the SORA project is mostly interested in the results of DG programs. If so, the DG Office may end up with an insular or internal evaluation but may not get to the critical issue of whether programs contribute to sustainable democracies. Sahley emphasized that DG Office wants to look at upper levels of impact and whether programs contribute to both democracy and undemocratic development.

One participant stated that he would like the DG Office to look at the mechanisms its programs use to support civil society. USAID is good at implementing large civil society programs in

countries undergoing political transition but not good with dealing with new CSOs in countries undergoing recent political transition. The participant believes that DG programs do not use small grants as often as they should and small grants are what would effectively aid new CSOs.

Another participant stated NGOs need to be asked more questions regarding the sustainability of their activities and the nature of the issues they address. We need to look at how and why the Agency want civil society to exist within particular countries and especially in times that are political sensitive or tumultuous.

One participant expressed the need to discuss inter-sectoral possibilities. He mentioned that the role of labor in development in collective bargaining and in enterprise decision-making is an effective way of getting attention to policy issues. Will these inter-sectoral issues be topics in the DG Office's SORA research? Sahley responded by stating that the DG Office is currently trying to decide if it wants to do one large study or several studies. The office has, however, already conducted some research that looks at inter-sectoral linkages. Hansen also mentioned that the civil society division does cooperate with other NGOs and parts of the Agency that work on education and environment, among other issues.

Another participant inquired about the time period the DG Office has established for conducting SORA research. She wanted to know if the office was looking at the effectiveness of direct mechanisms, such as direct grants to NGOs, or looking at spending through the use of U.S. private and voluntary organizations (PVOs). Hansen stated that the civil society division has not determined action on this question since it has yet to look at records and available data from both the Agency and also from NGOs.

An audience participant stressed that if the civil society division intends to look at the impact of civil society programs, then we should look at both the presence of non-civil society organizations in the mix and also funding resources.

Another participant said that PACT and USAID's work together has shown that CSOs have the ability to create political momentum in developing countries. Although PACT does not look at specific groups, it uses durability, institutional strength, and networks of organizations in order to measure impact in an enabling environment to be more accessible.

Hansen and Sahley thanked the participants for their comments. Hansen added that the civil society division is also interested in focusing on faith-based and mass-based organizations in evaluating civil society programming. He asked participants to continue to let the DG Office know what they think about the relationship between civil society and political parties, business associations, and environmental organizations.

Plenary: Evaluating Democracy Assistance

10:00-12:00 Thursday, December 5, 2002

Breakout Session: Decentralization

Moderator: Ed Connerley, USAID DG Office

Ed Connerley presented an overview of the decentralization portion of the DG Office's SORA project. Within the decentralization sub-sector, DG decentralization programs, decentralization activities conducted under the technical guidance of USAID's Europe and Eurasia Bureau (E&E), and activities influenced by USAID's Urban Programs Office will be assessed.

Over the past year, a SORA working group has worked to prepare a draft working paper that will suggest basic parameters for assessment of decentralization support programs and their contribution to enduring democratic regimes. Members include the managers of the sub-sector areas, a DG research methods expert, and a representative of the DG Office's Information Unit. Also formed was a USAID reference group to ensure that the research effort contributes fully to the various ongoing and future decentralization support activities undertaken throughout the Agency. Members of the reference group include representatives of the various USAID stakeholders in decentralization support activities.

Several research methodologies are currently being discussed as options to implement SORA. First, the option of comparative case studies provides in-depth evaluation of a selection of countries based on analysis of the economic and political situations of the countries compared and the specific decentralization support activities undertaken in the countries. A second option is that of field network research that engages in longitudinal empirical research on selected USAID decentralization programs and component activities. The third option involves surveys and the adaptation of the knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) survey technique to democracy applications.

Connerley raised some issues the working group has been focusing on. A main concern has been how to attribute change directly to USAID programs. What works because or in spite of USAID involvement in a particular country? The new Millennium Challenge Account could also affect which countries the DG Office chooses to assess. Some of the issues raised by members of the audience included the similar work done by the DG programs and other entities like the E&E Bureau and a need for consolidation, a need to assess other elements like health, economic, and regional issues and its impact on decentralization, the role of poverty reduction as a goal of USAID programs, and a need to measure to what extent does decentralization increase peoples confidence in democracy. A future action agreed upon by the session's participants was the creation of a reference group consisting of contractors of decentralization projects that work with USAID and academics. The reference group will meet two to four times within the next year to discuss the current issues and ways to improve the implementation of SORA.

Plenary: Evaluating Democracy Assistance

10:00-12:00 Thursday, December 5, 2002

Breakout Session: Legislative Strengthening

Moderator: Keith Schulz, USAID DG Office

The moderator, Keith Schulz, began by noting that these breakout sessions were designed to answer questions about the SORA project related to legislative strengthening. SORA is an ambitious effort to explore the impact of all DG programs and sectors and determine what works and under what circumstances. To date, evaluation efforts have been mostly anecdotal. A more systematic, in-depth look at programming and approaches is clearly needed.

Schulz stated that SORA work on legislative strengthening began earlier than the other sub-sectors as he has been developing his own evaluation project for over two years. Schulz has assembled a group of 10 to 12 individuals who are practitioners, USAID staff, and DG partners to determine how best to measure impact. Having met twice already, the group developed a working paper with draft methodology and protocol that outlines a two-pronged approach for SORA evaluation of legislative strengthening. This approach is composed of comparative case studies that would be more rigorous than single-country case studies and would incorporate a set of questions, working hypothesis, and comparative data from several countries. The second part of the approach entails extensive field networking that involves longitudinal data gathering, relying on local resources and individuals to provide survey data, indicators, and so forth. The specifics for this approach have not yet been determined. Schulz hopes to start field research early next year and expects preliminary conclusions also within the next year.

The key questions that Schulz's working group have identified:

1. What is the best way to measure programs?
2. What do we mean by "success"?
3. What external factors need to be considered outside of our own efforts? For example, to what extent does the country context matter? This is one reason that it is important to combine the cross-country case studies with the longitudinal, single-country information.
4. How can we accurately measure impact in cases where other donors are working in the same country or region?

A participant mentioned that one tool PACT has used in Zimbabwe, the Advocacy Index, might be a valid method for examining legislative strengthening programs. The index breaks down advocacy into numerous elements and an independent panel ranks advocacy programming according to this index, which provides measurement data for R4s. On a regional scale, the Afrobarometer and Latinobarometer are similar examples of efforts to measure performance. Another audience member countered that there is a general feeling that the kind of information we get from these measurement efforts is not as substantive as it should be. He hoped that SORA will move beyond this to include more substance on attitudes.

Another participant raised the issue of short-term funding. She noted that this is often an impediment to effective programming and inquired whether SORA will take program management into consideration. Schulz answered that he is not certain how those variables will be measured or considered, but length of intervention is definitely an important issue, with long-term intervention usually proving to be more successful.

Several attendees expressed the hope that this evaluation effort will be as inclusive as possible, looking at a variety of viewpoints. There was a general consensus that a mechanism for sharing experiences would be very useful, even on a regional level. One participant cited the International Legislative Strengthening conference that USAID co-sponsored in 2000 as an excellent opportunity for networking and sharing lessons learned and asked whether USAID would continue to sponsor these events. Schulz said that he did not know, but added that he hoped any future conferences would be truly international events, with broader participation by other international donors, rather than a predominantly USAID gathering. Schulz also pointed out that there is frequently a sizable gap between donor organizations in terms of how much attention they have devoted to legislative strengthening programs. The DG Office has already completed the background work in this sector and is ready to move forward with “second generation” efforts like SORA. Other donors, for the most part, are not yet to that point.

Several attendees noted that too much emphasis is often placed on what we should measure without clearly defining our goals. The focus should instead be on the larger underlying questions. The DG Office should be asking how partners and practitioners design legislative strengthening programs. Do such programs have to be within the democracy sector or can non-DG programs that include these activities also be classed as legislative strengthening? Practitioners should question how we move forward in this area without upsetting the delicate balance that has been established with host governments. Another important question is how to improve implementation and oversight once legislation has been passed. How can competing contractors be encouraged to practice knowledge sharing? Additionally, how can missions be convinced to improve their record keeping?

Schulz answered that these are exactly the type of issues that should be examined in the SORA project. He added that it would be great if this project also leads to better reporting and analysis on the part of both missions and partners.

Schulz concluded by noting that he has been careful to include the implementing partners in the working group, as SORA will be stronger due to their participation. While he recognized a definite conflict of interest to have implementing partners involved in the actual conduct of the research, Schulz stressed that they will continue to be an invaluable information resource.

Plenary: Evaluating Democracy Assistance

10:00-12:00 Thursday, December 5, 2002

Breakout Session: Elections and Political Processes

Moderators:

Michele Schimpp, USAID DG Office

Sundaa Bridgett, USAID DG Office

Paul Nuti, USAID DG Office

Michele Schimpp explained that the objective of the ongoing SORA assessment of DG programs is to deepen and refine our thinking on which activities commonly implemented achieve the most impact and what variables influence achievement, thereby informing mission programmatic choices. SORA entails several sub-sector program studies and DCHA/DG has already started drafting a paper for an impact study of political party development assistance. The DG Office believes that it is critical to the success of this impact study that the evaluative approach and methodology reflect the best collective knowledge and experience of implementing partners and subject experts.

Sundaa Bridgett and Paul Nuti provided a brief presentation on the political party concept paper. Nuti explained the general research process involving an inventory of activities, desk study, working group, and field research. He continued to explain that a working group of USAID staff, political party development experts, and representatives of implementing partners will convene to develop an evaluation framework and discuss issues related to methodology. The working group will consist of approximately 10 people and it is expected to meet on two separate occasions, each for approximately a half-day of discussion. Among other tasks, the group will perform four specific tasks. They will provide input on a sound analytical approach for evaluating political party development assistance programs. They will review and discuss a typology of political party programs and approaches most employed in political party assistance programs. They will also review definitions of impact in political party development assistance programs. Last, they will develop hypotheses/propositions and suggest appropriate questions to be answered by the study. Nuti explained that the general idea is that the information discussed during the two sessions will inform a research design and protocol for the implementation of the impact study of political party assistance.

Bridgett and Nuti proceeded to engage the audience in a question and answer session. They asked the audience for ideas on what kinds of issues should be reviewed in the impact studies of elections and political processes. Audience participants presented several ideas. Analysis of long-term impact of young political leadership training programs is important in addition to developing a better understanding of which political party systems are most responsive to USAID assistance-led programs. Participants would also like the DG Office to develop better sequencing structures with party assistance, in other words, when is it appropriate to engage in internal democratization activities. The DG Office should also measure the impact of programs designed around helping parties develop a message. The issue here is that the participants believed that such activities are merely helping parties gain an electoral edge, rather than become more accountable and representative.

In terms of important questions or hypotheses that should be tested, the audience suggested a range of questions. First, how can we determine if political parties are actually contributing to 'democratization' within a country? Second, what types of institutional factors, conditions, history and regional variables should be factored into political party assistance? Third, how can we determine that political parties are effective for purposes of measuring the impact of our USAID

assistance? Moreover, how can we determine changes in political party performance or effectiveness? Fourth, how can USAID better measure and evaluate the results of individual political party programs? For example, the participant suggested creating an evaluation framework to be developed for end of the project reports.

In looking for new resources and sources of information, audience participants agreed that USAID should reach out more to academics that have focused their research on political parties. Many academics have identified that weak political parties are one of the greatest shortcomings to fragile and backsliding democracies. Also, other organizations are now beginning to work more closely with political parties and USAID should build synergies with these organizations in order to avoid duplication in assistance programs. One participant suggested that USAID should avoid focusing using traditional parties as resources and overlooking some of the smaller, more reform-minded parties.

Plenary: Evaluating Democracy Assistance

10:00-12:00 Thursday, December 5, 2002

Breakout Session: Country Case Studies

Moderator: Lynn Carter, Management Systems International

Speakers:

Bruce Kay, USAID DG Office

Eric Kite, USAID DG Office

Zeric Smith, Management Systems International

Lynn Carter began with an overview of the first year's SORA case studies, which focused on three areas in Bolivia, Bulgaria, and South Africa: rule of law, local governance, and legislative strengthening. Regarding the last area, all three missions tried to strengthen communications between legislators and constituencies, and all three were unsuccessful because they failed to factor the incentives of a proportional representation system.

Carter outlined the key factors surrounding the impact of the DG programs:

- Commitment of the political elite to reform—the most important factor, particularly in Bolivia and South Africa
- Achievement of systemwide reform required leaders who understood and were skillful in using the rules of their political systems in pursuing change
- Dollars invested, not clearly correlated to the significance of the program impact
- Less complex the institutional reforms, the quicker and more obvious the successes
- International community's focus on elections as the fundamental element of democracy creates a powerful incentive for credible elections

The influence of USAID programs on political change in all three countries proved striking. Impact in Bolivia and South Africa was more substantial than in Bulgaria, but USAID-influenced changes remained important to the latter country. In Bolivia and South Africa, USAID strategies helped progressive governments design and execute major political system reforms. In Bulgaria, by contrast, pro-reforms elements were weak and/or out of power for several years after the transition from communist rule. Attempts to work with central government produced little impact, and USAID turned to expanding the demand for reform and working with pockets of reformers wherever it could find them. New opportunities to work with the central government emerged only after reformers came to power in 1997; political and economic change was noteworthy thereafter.

Bruce Kay continued the presentation with a review of the second year's case studies, which took place in Croatia, Ghana, and Guatemala. The selection criteria for the second set were adjusted somewhat, based on findings from the first year. The countries selected had a medium level of competition, a low level of executive constraint, and a high level of development. The surprising finding from the second set of studies was that on political will. Here, executives with the greatest gains were found with governments that had the weakest commitment.

Relative to Croatia, the team was able to determine specific issues pertaining to USAID programming in the country. Relevant to other donors, USAID assistance in the political processes and media areas was particularly significant. Political party assistance provided through NDI succeeded in helping parties conduct a successful campaign; opinion polls by IRI were instrumental in helping parties form successful coalitions. USAID led to an increase in

voter participation for 2000 elections. Donor assistance to civil society had some influence, but less so than exogenous factors.

Eric Kite added to this discussion findings from his team's work in Guatemala. Guatemala was working not only with a lack of political elite consensus on the rules of the game, but also ethnic cleavage and recent emergence from civil war. The team was not able to find the same level of impact as the other studies, except regarding the Office of Transition Initiatives' demobilization assistance. This was crucial in that it laid the foundation for all other work. The study did, however, lend support to the important role of political will. The Agency also helped transform the courts in Guatemala City from losing hundreds of cases a year to two. Guatemala is retrogressing in a number of areas, but less so in many places where USAID has been active, such as the Guatemalan Forensic Anthropology Foundation.

Zeric Smith continued the presentation with a review of the work done on the Ghana case study, where there was generally a positive evolution on the political and economic fronts. There was also a considerable level of USAID impact. The team found that the political elite and the opposition figures were skilled in the rules of the game. The hypothesis that less complex institutions achieved more success was supported in the Ghana study. Donors' elections focus also support a great deal of positive impact as a 1992 election that was controversial led to a 1996 election that was much improved to a 2000 election when the opposition came to power. USAID assistance in this area began in 1994.

In the legislative strengthening area, the evidence was less compelling. For local governance, there were less systemic impacts, but good overall in a number of the pilot cases.

From the audience, a question was asked regarding the utility of the case study vehicle for SORA and for the larger DG question of what works. Panelists responded that we still do not have a critical mass of case studies, but that we are working on that. As the number of cases accumulates, we will have a rolling synthesis of the findings. The DG Office is not at the point of drawing definitive conclusions.

Another participant addressed the DG-EG interface by questioning to what extent country-led economic development programs have helped to develop political will. Further explorations were begun in Ghana and will be considered as an angel in the year three studies. In Guatemala, this question arose repeatedly and the team did look for the reform-minded elite in the economic sector.

A subsequent question was posed whether the teams will return to the same countries, for example to follow-up on other sub-sectors like civic education. While the idea is attractive, a final determination will be made once more findings are available and once the DG Office has a better sense of resource commitment.

A member of the audience commented that the DG Office should start looking past the idea of political will. He noted that it would be more productive to view these actors as acting rationally to further their own interests, rather than generically pursuing reforms. In this scenario, the actors would be pursuing their own interests, which require reforms; the approach would provide a truer sense of incentives.

Plenary: Failed and Failing States

1:30-3:00 Thursday, December 5, 2002

Moderator: Gail Lecce, Deputy Director, USAID DG Office

Speakers:

Roger Winter, Assistant Administrator, USAID Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance

Mark Malloch Brown, Administrator, United Nations Development Programme

Terrence Lyons, Assistant Professor, Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution, George Mason University

Gail Lecce opened the session by asking the speakers and the participants to think how to program resources to deal with the problem of the collapsing states. Roger Winter added that the concept of failed and failing states is tied to the expectation of how the states are performing against their declared commitment to human and civil rights. A well functioning state feels responsibility for its citizens and respects them. A failed state does not deliver on the obligations regarding its citizens. Winter said that a legacy, such as a colonial past or patterns of dependency, matter a lot in the state-building process. Weak or collapsing states have complicated histories and often lack the basic structure enabling the state to function: such entities have no institutions and lack an elite. Their sovereignty is often established by force and comes through a capture and control over a territory by a rebel group that applies different rules to different parts of the population.

Winter added that in the view of many NGOs the international system favors state rights over human rights. Furthermore, states can manipulate the international system to their advantage especially considering that the penalties for states offending their populations are weak or used sparingly. The international system is also unprepared to deal effectively with rebels. Many contemporary rebel groups are well organized, possess effective means of communication, and are involved in fully-fledged conflicts either inside a state where they operate or across the state borders. The new strength of rebel groups and a tragedy of civilians who are becoming target of conflicts are forcing the international community to take a different look at civil wars.

Winter concluded by saying that any humanitarian intervention, whether conducted by a government agency or a NGO, is political. Despite the declared neutrality of donors and NGOs, saving the lives of one group is perceived as a stand against another which wants to alter the country's conditions and perceives a vulnerable group as an enemy. However, the existence of "ancient tribal hatred" should not be used as an excuse for inaction in these complex humanitarian emergencies.

Mark Malloch Brown acknowledged that the issue of failed and failing states is becoming increasingly important in development. Even though the number of collapsing states is rapidly rising (for example, one third of UNDP's country officers now work on the issues of failed and failing states), there is really no conceptual framework for thinking about and dealing with poorly performing states. The U.S.'s Millennium Challenge Account or the World Bank programs are designed to reward well-performing and reforming countries, but development thinking is not advanced when it comes to programs for bad performers. Malloch Brown suggested several aspects to consider for creating a framework for development of poorly performing countries. He proposed a rights-based approach that would be sensitive to the rights of citizens of poorly performing states. The failure to address these rights, as well as needs, of citizens will otherwise contribute further to the weakening and possible state failure. State failure, in turn, will lead to increased global security risks as has been demonstrated by the events of September

11th. The international community has an obligation and a responsibility to address the roots of such failures.

How can a strategy for working with failing states be designed? Brown noted that humanitarian assistance to people in need is just a beginning of the approach. It should be combined with technical assistance and civil society development. These can be achieved through working with NGOs. Withholding support from failing states perpetuates the process of their collapse. Donors should be willing to take more risks and be prepared for a loss of resources and disappointments in their efforts to improve the capacity of failing states. Malloch Brown acknowledged that post-conflict states are highly risky and volatile, but lack of support will increase the misery and bring even higher instability. The willingness of donors to take risks is currently motivated by international factors, such as foreign policy decisions made by countries. For example, according to Malloch Brown, donors are willing to intervene in Afghanistan but hesitant to tackle state collapse in Africa because of the national interests and foreign policy considerations certain countries have in Afghanistan versus Africa.

Malloch Brown suggested several ways through which donors can moderate conditions in failing states. Most importantly, he argued for the development of programs that focus on institution building and increase governments' capacity for service delivery, especially at the local level. If necessary, donors should be prepared to take over service delivery and substitute for governments whose institutions either no longer or do not yet exist. Also, Malloch Brown noted that grants as a funding mechanism provide more flexibility than other funding mechanisms and allow for more risk taking. Finally, the issues of an exit strategy and handing over countries to the World Bank for capital intense reconstruction need to be considered from the beginning of assistance, as should staffing issues as personnel assignments to crisis settings are considered hardship posts and pose a career challenge to staff as well as management.

Terrence Lyons presented an analysis of failed and failing states from an institutional point of view. He argued that state failure does not create a vacuum of institutions and that all states, including failed ones, are characterized by a specific set of institutional arrangements. The institutions of a failed state are different from ones of a stable, well functioning state and are based on violence, manipulation and fear. Nevertheless, the institutions, which are a reflection of a society paralyzed by fear and lack of security, are in place, leading to a question of how these institutions can be engaged by the international community rather than asking what new institutional structures have to be built. In the process of reconstructing failed states, donors cannot simply wish for the new, often unappealing elites and new institutions to go away, because it will not happen. What needs to happen is re-conceptualization of these new institutions and finding ways of transforming them into stable and workable state structures. This can be done by changing an incentive structure for organizations and their leaders, who are most often militarized rebels.

Lyons discussed a successful engagement of rebels in Mozambique who received assistance for de-militarization and were able to transform their organization (RENAMO) into a civilian political party that entered electoral politics. On the contrary, in Liberia and Angola, little attention was paid to the transformation of militia organizations, and the two states, lacking stable civilian structures, continue to balance on the verge of collapse.

In the discussion, Lyons was asked to assess the willingness of "bad institutions" to change and the political conditionalities of working with states that have problematic, militarized institutions. He replied that a key is to focus on institutions and transforming them, not individuals, and that a successful strategy will build conditions to remove fear from society. Winter added that there are

no international or USAID agreements or regulations as to when a state is declared a failed one and withdrawal of assistance occurs. Malloch Brown noted that the level of involvement of the international community in assistance to or running a collapsed state varies. It could be provided in a form of strong support to the indigenous administration (as in the case of Afghanistan) or through trusteeship or protectorate (East Timor).

Plenary: Failed and Failing States

1:30-3:00 Thursday, December 5, 2002

Concurrent Session: Failed and Failing States: How Can Conflict Resolution Help Address the Challenge?

Moderator: Tjip Walker, USAID Office of Transition Initiatives

Speakers:

Robert Ricigliano, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee

James Tull, Conflict Management Group

The purpose of the panel was for conflict resolution practitioners to present lessons learned that would be particularly relevant for those working in failed and failing states. Speakers presented tools used in conflict resolution and gave examples from their experiences. They believe it is crucial for conflict resolution to be embraced and implemented at local levels rather than being mandated from the central government, and to be inclusive of multiple actors and levels of society.

James Tull stated that in failed or failing states it seems difficult or impossible to rebuild the state from the center. Additionally, conflict is a causal or accompanying factor in state failure. These two assumptions are helpful in understanding the potential usefulness of conflict resolution (CR) tools. Furthermore, a failed state environment requires a conflict resolution project to be integrated across diverse fields and actors. Projects need to combine political, social and structural activity and require cooperation across diverse fields and between official government actors and civil society and other groups. They also need to be integrated across diverse levels of society; programs should link international, national, regional and local actors; and strategies should be more bottom-up than top-down.

Robert Ricigliano explained that NGOs can sometimes facilitate where a more formal group of actors could not. He described an exercise called “facilitated joint brainstorming,” where opposing groups get together and discuss what would satisfy each group. He presented a real-life example where local warring factions agreed to a refugee return and to rebuilding each other’s destroyed villages. Once something had been agreed to on a smaller level, the official peace negotiators were more willing to trust and talk with the other side.

Tull suggested methods for getting groups to focus on the issues, such as an interest analysis and a best alternative to a negotiated agreement (BATNA) and alternative analysis. In addition to these two options, another method is the four quadrants diagnosis for planning/action which requires stepping back, trying to understand the root causes of the problem, developing approaches for solving the problem, and developing action plans for these approaches. Other options are the currently perceived choice tool that entails looking at conflict from the opposition’s side and scenario planning which looks at a situation with a long-term perspective.

Tull recommended some tools for facilitation. He encouraged the use of peer dialogues, giving an example of Venezuelan congressmen visiting congressmen in the United States to learn how conflicts were resolved between parties in the U.S. Congress. Another useful tool is the ladder of inference for polarized negotiations and examination of perceptions for looking at how we reason and interpret data and what we conclude. Tull also promotes the use of facilitated joint brainstorming and ongoing facilitation and training which gives parties the skills needed to effectively manage conflicts in the failed state environment.

Tjip Walker stated that USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives has made use of these tools in its work, and he hopes other offices will adopt them too. The new Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation will offer mechanisms that provide these types of services.

One person questioned whether dealing with ethnic conflicts by decentralizing and taking things to lower levels wouldn't make things worse. Tull explained that this tension is mitigated by the necessity to have a presence at the top and get the central government's buy-in to work at the local level.

An audience participant stated that there exists a catch 22 between aiding states that are falling apart and ones showing progress. Presenters believe we need to get CR tools to the most needy countries. They added that they sometimes have to downplay their affiliation with the U.S. government, but at the same time, the folks they work with want to know that they do have channels to government officials.

One person noticed there are two groups that seem to be the main force in blocking a peace process. They are middle-aged men in positions of some power, and young male "hotheads." Progress is made only when other groups, such as women or the elderly, become involved in the process. The presenters suggested searching out upcoming leaders who may already have a degree of power and also suggested focusing on shared interests. Intra-community work and back channels are also important in these situations.

Plenary: Failed and Failing States

1:30-3:00 Thursday, December 5, 2002

Concurrent Session: Surviving States, Failing Nations: Addressing Failures of Nation-building in Asia

Moderator: Gwendolyn Bevis, Academy for Educational Development

Speakers:

David Timberman, Management Systems International

John Grayzel, USAID Bureau for Policy and Program Coordination

William Cole, The Asia Foundation

Five questions guided the discussion of nation-building in Asia. First, how should DG programs balance activities that promote unity by supporting diversity and autonomy with those that do so by encouraging common attitudes and behaviors? Second, how should DG programs address a lack of national unity where states behave in ways that do not encourage loyalty? Third, how do programs address tension between respective subnational traditions and supporting human rights? Fourth, how do we deal with the seeming increased divergence between state and national identity? Can we simply focus on the state and leave the nation to other processes? Last, how do we determine the relative merits of support to good governance of state institutions in opposition to the merits of supporting larger democratic processes?

David Timberman began the panel by underscoring the importance of the nation-state in nation-building. He stated the need to look at separatism in Asian countries as an acute system of failed nation-building. Some states have succeeded in consolidating a unified state but were ultimately unable to consolidate the composition and character of the nation. For example, in Sri Lanka, the state created conditions that led to Tamil separatism. In China, the strong state and party apparatus still did not prevent the Muslims in Xinjiang province from assuming separatist identities.

One of the greatest challenges in state-building is the ability to agree upon key elements of a nation-state with a multinational society. To build a nation-state, there must be a common national identity derived from a shared history or culture. In multinational societies, the quest for a common identity cannot require groups to sacrifice too much of their own specific identities. The state must exhibit a general sentiment of non-discrimination amongst the various groups involved in society. The most important thing in nation-building is for governments to not favor or alienate certain groups too much or for too long. Unfortunately, governments worldwide have done this. Traditional 21st century approaches have manipulated nationalism, have had strong centralized states, and been bolstered by state-led economic development, and had unified select languages and cultures. The results of these approaches were the emergence of several worldwide separatist movements.

John Grayzel stressed that today's examples of failing states exhibit fuzzy interaction between representatives of the nation and the state. Dealing with the phenomena of peoples' identities is more difficult than participation in the administrative structure of the state. Since democracy is about choice, we want people to choose the state over the nation. This is what our DG programs should continue to be about because we believe the state functions well and better than the nation.

Grayzel offered the example of Mindanao, Philippines, where the Muslim population is only a small part of the overall population numbering well over 80 million. He stated that nation-building programs in the Philippines should concentrate on Mindanao, which has been a constant source

of conflict as the population of Mindanao has always been marginal to the functioning of the state. When the Philippines became independent from the United States, it engaged in major resettlement activities that moved people from other islands to the island of Mindanao under the rubric of economic growth. Conflicts emerged because the indigenous Muslim population experienced little of this economic growth. If the government had included the Muslim population in its economic growth agenda, it might have been able to prevent separatism.

Grayzel proposed activities such as building complementary regional relationships and representing opportunities for expressions of nationhood that could complement membership of certain groups in statehood. The Mindanao case presents a potential strategy for dealing with minority groups in situations of emerging separatism. The goal of the strategy is to learn how to give minority groups an adequate sense of nationhood since nationhood is a much stronger force than statehood in the long run.

Bill Cole discussed how in several countries the state is being built by dangerous warlords. USAID's goal there is to determine how foreign assistance can best help. Typical DG programming is not appropriate because many authoritarian warlords may not support its liberal and emancipatory values. The example of Afghanistan offers several lessons in this area. Given the ethnic diversity of the Afghan population, the nation of Afghans still managed to live together in peace even though the state of Afghanistan underwent several failed attempts at unification up until the 1980s. Ten years of *mujahideen* resistance left Afghanistan fragmented, followed by a civil war that left the country in the hands of the Taliban. With the rapid collapse of the Taliban after the outset of the war on terrorism, authoritarian warlords resumed control of their former areas. The creation of the Loya Jirga, establishment of a constitution and a human rights commission, and scheduling of elections were additional steps that served the purpose of destabilizing the warlords.

An audience participant mentioned the formal definition of a state as an institution with the ability to monopolize violence and tax. He stressed how it is important to look at this definition as an indicator of what the essential activities of the state are. Cole stated that, in the case of Afghanistan, the idea of the nation has trumped the idea of the state. Another participant stated that the state, however, proves stronger than the nation in its administrative capacities even though national identity often does trump the opportunities presented by the state. One participant noted that, when the state fails a specific group of people, they often look outside of the state to their other affiliations, such as religion, for support and empowerment. USAID should look at why and how they groups seek other affiliations for support and evaluate how the multiple identities of citizens intersect with one another. Gwendolyn Bevis added that the nation is not pre-determined. She suggested it might be interesting to get citizens to rank their affiliations and identities, allowing us to see how the sense of nationhood is relational.

Cole stated that, although many identities interact and intersect with one another, practitioners should prefer that citizens focus more on their state identity than their national identities. The state-building we support should reinforce their sense of state identity. One audience member stated that one way to encourage citizens to have greater affiliation to their state identities is to emphasize and promote awareness of civil society rights. Unfortunately, citizens are not encouraged to be more aware of their responsibilities and to be good citizens. If they were, that would inadvertently encourage the state to function more effectively and cultivate a sense of community and humanity.

Plenary: Failed and Failing States

1:30-3:00 Thursday, December 5, 2002

Concurrent Session: Rebuilding Trust and Viable Governance in Post-conflict Societies

Moderator: Michael Morfit, Development Alternatives, Inc.

Speakers:

Oren Murphy, Development Alternatives, Inc.

Joel Jutkowitz, Development Alternatives, Inc.

Robert Muscat, Author

Marina Ottaway, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

Michael Morfit gave an overview of USAID's engagement in post-conflict situations. He noted the biggest success that the Agency and other donors have had in these situations is through the design of new mechanisms to address post-conflict windows of opportunity. Through its Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI), USAID has been successful at speeding up its response process. Having a greater range of experience in these situations has left the Agency with a larger body of knowledge to reflect on. The panel looked beyond lessons learned and anecdotes by asking practitioners to assess what experiences tell us about models and approaches, while the academics remarked whether this held water theoretically.

Joel Jutkowitz presented a case study of building trust at the local level in Guatemala, where the conflict was between marginalized indigenous groups and the minority group that the government formed part of. Since independence, Guatemala has failed to incorporate the majority of its population into the political processes. The state deteriorated to become a partial nation-state because it was not inclusive. To maintain even this semi-state, the government and its agencies became increasingly repressive. The end result was a civil war that dragged on for more than three decades. Destruction of social capital, such as community-based activism, became a principal goal of the national government and the military in their strategy to win the civil war.

In part as a result of the 1996 Peace Accords, ending the civil war, a process has begun to promote democracy and effective participation by all Guatemalans within an expanded conception of the Guatemalan nation. An aim of these accords was to reverse the destruction of the community that had grown out of the national government's approach to defeat the guerrillas. Specifically, the accords called for a process of decentralization and expansion of local participation.

Jutkowitz focused his presentation on a project in one of the most severely affected departments in Guatemala, El Quiché, as well as neighboring areas of the peace zone. The NEXUS Municipal project, funded by USAID and implemented by Development Alternatives, Inc., sought to strengthen citizen participation and augment the capacity of local governments to respond to citizen demands. It also worked at the national level to improve the political environment for decentralization and to enhance the resources available to local governments to carry out the mandates they receive from the national government and to meet the demands of their citizens. The project operated in 42 municipalities from September 1998 through June 2002.

To build trust and promote citizen participation, the NEXUS project sought to produce mechanisms that would institutionalize citizen involvement at key points in the process of municipal governance. These consisted of ways for participatory planning to formulate a municipal development plan and a related municipal budget, mechanisms to inform citizens

about local government performance in implementing the plan and related budget, and means to give citizens the opportunity to review government performance. With the support of NEXUS, citizen groups developed their own list of priorities, denoted as citizens' agendas. Based on those agendas, citizen groups interacted with local officials to develop an appropriate budget that included their priorities. Local authorities used the radio and community meetings to report on the progress made in implementing these citizen priorities.

The NEXUS project offered several lessons learned that could be applied to future democratic local governance programs. Chief among these is that securing access to municipalities has to be based on the existence of a will to reform political practices. Next, citizen participation efforts can make a significant difference in the form of operation of a municipality. Finally, the levels of participation suggest that behavioral norms could be altered.

Oren Murphy followed up the Guatemala example with a study of efforts to rebuild trust and social capital in Maluku, Indonesia. The situation in Maluku, or the Spice Islands, encompasses virtually every class, social group, and geographic region, and involves security forces, militias, politicians, religious leaders, and ordinary citizens. Deliberate manipulation of the conflict early on ensured it would take on a Muslim versus Christian tone, but the realities were far more complex, with roots stretching back to the earliest colonial period.

In the post-Soharto era, the balance in Maluku began to unravel. In January 1999, violence broke out on Ambon Island, following a seemingly simple disagreement between a bus conductor and a passenger. The violence later spread to southeast and central Maluku in July and continued throughout the province through December. April 2000 saw the arrival in the province of Laskar Jihad, the radical Islamic group from Java. At the same time, the Maluku Sovereignty Front, a hard-line Christian separatist movement, became active. Following some two years of the worst destruction and bloodshed Indonesia had ever seen, the central government brokered a peace accord in early 2002. The accord, known as the Malino Declaration, contained a pledge to stop the violence and to support socio-economic development in Maluku; it was the first time the central government had taken such an initiative to end the conflict.

Murphy closely examined one program, designed to rebuild social capital while remaining flexible enough to seize specific windows of opportunity created by the changing nature of the conflict and the public's reaction to it. In the early stages of the USAID Transition Initiative in Maluku, activities focused on reconciliation efforts, consensus building, and awareness raising to bring Muslims and Christians together in an attempt to revitalize dormant relationships along cultural or community lines and to address ways of moving forward together. As Christian and Muslim Moluccans met and interacted, there was a constant search for safe and appropriate places to have such meetings. As a result, the USAID Transition Initiative supported efforts to encourage positive interactions between the two groups and facilitated the establishment and expansion of neutral spaces in Maluku. The initiative also funded community activities that brought these groups together around a common interest, such as cleaning up the city. As the neutral spaces expanded and interactions increased, citizens of various parts of Maluku began to think about returning to their pre-conflict villages. The USAID Transition Initiative also collaborated with different parties to develop and implement activities to assist people in making decisions about their future. Several issues stand out here that might be applied to other conflict mitigation programs worldwide. Practitioners should support local efforts within a broader programmatic framework, work with the local government, assist community groups to dialog with military and police, establish secure and neutral spaces, and leverage other donor assistance.

Marina Ottaway concluded by noting several questions raised by the preceding presentations. What is the connection between reconciliation at the local level and reconciliation at the national level? What needs to be done in the absence of a national agreement? How far can local level developments progress lacking a national framework? In terms of reconciliation, is it spontaneous? Spontaneous reconciliation often arises as a by-product to groups attempting to solve a problem, rather than as the primary end product. Are we, as outsiders, unnecessarily complicating matters? Last, are these programs cost effective and are we overusing experts, leaving no money at the end of the day to actually do the programs?

Plenary: Failed and Failing States

1:30-3:00 Thursday, December 5, 2002

Concurrent Session: Exacerbating and Mitigating Forces in State Failure

Moderator: Gary Hansen, USAID DG Office

Speakers:

Pat Merloe, National Democratic Institute for International Affairs

Douglas Rutzen, International Center for Not-for-profit Law

Mark Frohardt, Internews Network

Jon Temin, Internews Network

A variety of factors exacerbate or mitigate prospects for state failure. This panel addressed the dynamics of the relationship between civil society and government in the context of state failure, with a particular focus on identifying prominent examples in each factor set and possible programmatic interventions that can constructively assist the stabilization and democratization processes.

Gary Hansen began with an overview of the session and Pat Merloe followed with a brief outline of the problem. Merloe suggested three categories of classification for failed states: a) consolidated failed states noted by a complete absence of central authority, numbering approximately two dozen, upon which there is wide agreement by the international community; b) virtually failed states; and c) states at risk of failing. In this last category, Merloe identified countries such as Cote D'Ivoire, Macedonia, Pakistan, and Zimbabwe.

Merloe noted that state degeneration factors are multiple, complex, and intertwined. This means that the international community must employ strategies to combat state failure across a variety of fronts. For example, diplomatic initiatives can encourage and at times compel a necessary give-and-take between antagonists competing over resource control. In the political sphere, programmatic interventions can structure and drive forward inter-party mediation processes which can lead to important frameworks for codes of conduct and power-sharing parameters, among other issues. Merloe cited NDI's efforts in Macedonia in 2000-2001 as an example. Investing in negotiated political settlements may yield positive results. Finally, independent election observation and monitoring can help bolster public and inter-party confidence in the political process.

On a less positive note, Merloe suggested that recent developments in Cote D'Ivoire illustrated two possible exacerbating factors: a) reliance upon politics and inter-party negotiated agreements in an environment of intense, winner-take-all political competition; and b) the inattentiveness and the reluctance to intervene of the international community effectively encouraged domestic actors to shun mediated solutions.

Doug Rutzen approached the problem from the perspective of NGO activities, particularly in the areas of advocacy and social service delivery, in state failure. Advocacy NGOs can help mitigate during transition by helping to inform and legitimize elections, providing a reservoir of talent for the new government, and helping form important bases of support for democratic successor governments. Examples of this are organizing debates, public dialogues, and election monitoring. Advocacy NGOs can also help connect people to governing institutions, and assist in consolidating or shoring up reform movements in backsliding states.

In terms of lessons learned, Rutzen argued that in most cases advocacy NGOs were mitigating factors vis-à-vis state failure. He cautioned practitioners of vertically fragmented NGO sectors coupled with political, economic, and social frustration.

Social service NGOs, on the other hand, can free up needed state resources, while democratizing social service delivery. These types of NGOs can contribute to reduced unemployment and provide critical humanitarian assistance. However, social service NGOs may worsen a situation by delivering services along fault lines, as was done in Macedonia. They may undermine the legitimacy of fragile central authority by offering real resources, as in Afghanistan, and they may distort local economies and co-opt other service providers, as in Algeria and Egypt.

Mark Frohardt spoke on the role of media in fostering or deterring conflict. Using the three country case studies of Rwanda, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and Georgia, Frohardt outlined the key indicator areas of media environment/structure, content, and types of intervention that are key to analysis. Regarding the environment and structure of the media, Frohardt identified capacity and reach, accessibility, human resources and skill levels, degree of isolation of journalists, and diversity and variety of media outlets, owners, journalists as key factors for consideration. When several of these factors together are relatively negative, exhibiting low capacity and accessibility, with high isolation of journalists, the prospects for media manipulation and exploitation are great. Frohardt then noted that, when media content is problematic, misuse of the media is already well under way. In this context, media are used by factions to create clear worldviews with limited perspectives of the present and future. The objectives of such content manipulation create fear, a sense of resignation, and feelings of inevitability of a given outcome.

Speaking about possible types of media programming in this context, Frohardt outlined three possible strategies: structural, content-specific, and aggressive interventions. Structural efforts, such as assisting the development of local media, were identified as most potentially helpful in helping media resist manipulation, and thus to deter state failure or crisis situations. Content-specific programs may be most effective when media misuse for propaganda and mobilization purposes is already taking place. Examples of this could include combating objectification and de-personalization of 'the other' through objective reporting on specific issues or entertainment-oriented programming. Finally, aggressive interventions, such as jamming broadcasts or providing alternate forms of programming, are usually employed in already radicalized situations.

Frohardt closed with the observation that media monitoring efforts were usually effective, and should be given sufficient consideration by DG officers. He also recommended that more research should be supported in exploring the role of media in state crisis and/or failure. A lively question and answer session followed, focusing on the role of the internet in media programming; appropriate sequencing of media interventions; and lessons learned from particular regions, especially Europe and Eurasia, in media programming.

Plenary: Failed and Failing States

1:30-3:00 Thursday, December 5, 2002

Concurrent Session: Institutional Strengthening Approaches to States in Crisis

Moderator: Gail Lecce, USAID DG Office

Speakers:

Eusebio Mujal-Leon, Casals & Associates, Inc.

Jim Ketterer, State University of New York

Bill Davis, DPK Consulting

Tom Cornell, ARD Inc.

The session focused on identifying "islands of integrity" for targeted DG interventions. Using case studies from Latin America, the four speakers illustrated several approaches to political reform in states in crisis. Eusebio Mujal-León underscored the need to find islands of integrity in Argentina's sea of corruption that pervades not just state institutions, but also the media and private enterprise as well. Jim Ketterer advocated laying a foundation for reform in legislatures in times of crisis, in order to build a cadre of new leadership pre-positioned to step into power as the country emerges post-conflict. Bill Davis highlighted a number of constraints that the aid community places on itself to achieve results, such as overstated expectations, assumption of causal impact of assistance on a non-linear problem, and unrealistically compressed timetables for projects. Finally, Tom Cornell provided a concrete example of an intervention in Colombia, where he worked on a project to invest in development at the level of local municipalities and communities at a time when the failing central government was incapable of delivering such assistance itself. The speakers outlined three of the possible operating environments for working in states in crisis: pervasive corruption in government and non-governmental institutions; a disconnection between central government and local institutions; and executive leadership distracted from regular duties by both internal and external threats.

Mujal-Leon stated that the current crisis in Latin America is characterized by a lack of governance and transparency. The international community placed high expectations on achieving democratic change through a market-driven approach to reform, but failed to solve underlying problems of development in many countries. Capitalist systems need a strong state system in order to evolve into economic societies. In its push to privatize and restructure national economies, the international community has tacitly collaborated with some weak and sometimes corrupt governments.

In Argentina, the government's mismanagement of the economic crisis undermined public confidence in its legitimacy and integrity. In the absence of strong institutions, oversight, and independence among branches of government, privatization created opportunities for corruption in both public and private sectors. Although presently no alternative to this system exists, there are islands of integrity that could be supported towards a transition to stronger, less corrupt institutions in the long term. These include support for reformists within mainstream and opposition political parties, as well as in civil society. Crises and development problems are ultimately solved endogenously, taking decades to effect institutional and cultural change. Therefore practitioners should plan on long-term investments, or else risk setting themselves up for failure by putting too much pressure on short-term results. Programs should seek out efficient and effective partners, imposing stringent standards on implementation for accountability.

Ketterer commented that legislatures in failed and failing states lack general prerequisites for development assistance, such as representation, lawmaking, oversight and political will. Even in

instances where these conditions may be present at the outset, the government may backslide over time. The State University of New York's approach to states in crisis is to quietly build islands of integrity by pre-positioning resources for positive change when/if the political space opens. By laying such a foundation, one does not have to build from the ground up after each political change or upheaval.

In targeting opportunities for change, one must first gauge the political will, including the relationship between the executive and the legislative branches of government. If the leadership is distracted by maintaining this relationship, or by consolidating power within their particular branch, other less prominent players may have room to start unobtrusively building capacity to implement reforms. These players include staffers and committee chairs in parliament or NGOs run by former parliamentary ministers or party representatives. Addressing the representation functions of MPs may counter the public perception that all government institutions, and by implication all politicians, are equally corrupt. Outreach programs, whereby MPs go out to provincial areas, can help dispel these preconceived notions. It is often beneficial to work with both civil society and the legislature in tandem ultimately to give people a voice through the legislature to resolve lingering issues in a participatory, representative way for post-conflict reconstruction. Nevertheless, if the institution is completely battered after a conflict, then it makes little sense to invest in this sector without a viable staff and other supportive resources for change.

Davis drew on his experience to enunciate several lessons learned. In countries in crisis, with irregular government service delivery, openings for change may exist at the community rather than at the national level. As local assistance often comes in 'under the radar' of higher-ups, it enables implementers to engage with people interested in creating new political systems from the ground up. Nevertheless, project managers need to appreciate the risks people take to work with us in such tenuous and highly politicized environments. Depending on the context and goals, modest projects may be better than more grandiose plans, especially as the enabling operational factors of political will, resident counterpart capacity, legal framework and good program design are never present at optimal levels at any one point in time. Local counterpart capacity must be built slowly in line with its absorptive capacity. All political processes are inherently non-linear, so that we, as field practitioners, cannot control this process with much predictability. This may not suit a typical USAID framework for project implementation, which includes a compressed timeline, assumes a linear progression of activities and judges project managers by their ability to control political processes in a sequential and causal way.

Cornell commented that such political change is the result of endogenous processes supported by the international community. Moreover, USAID is not the only agency that makes a difference in development in any given country, yet it often sets out its anticipated results as if it were solely responsible for their achievement. In the case of Colombia, the political implosion was characterized by a lack of resource flows from the center to the periphery, low political will, insurgencies, high coca production, and control over coca producing areas. USAID typically likes to engage the central actors in a country, but the center in this instance could only acknowledge a need for development, without having the power to intervene for real change. Two possible alternative islands for integrity emerged in either using para-government organizations to develop a new center, or targeting programs at marginal, more local areas.

USAID elected to provide technical assistance to communities and/or municipalities to establish a demand-driven approach for services. Assistance covered development plans, management, resource mobilization, information, public services, and social investment. The project created the Social Investment Fund (SIF) to get resources to under-served areas, providing an incentive

for people to start working on key issues. This project also facilitated dialogue around issues at the periphery as a platform for eventual dialogue with higher-level authorities. The SIF provided concrete resources for development at the local level, establishing prerequisites for awards such as a prioritized development plan, local financial oversight, and participatory decision-making fora. While USAID cannot provide the funds in perpetuity, links can be made to national governments to step in when the situation stabilizes. USAID can also act as an intermediary to represent the project to other donors and people can raise funds within their own communities.

Plenary: Pluralism, Democracy & Governance in Islamic Societies: Key Issues & Policy

9:00-10:30 Friday, December 6, 2002

Moderator: Jerry Hyman, Director, USAID DG Office

Speakers:

Wendy Chamberlin, Assistant Administrator, USAID Bureau for Asia and the Near East

Elizabeth Cheney, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Near East Affairs, Department of State

Akbar Ahmed, Ibn Khaldun Chair for Islamic Studies, American University

Wendy Chamberlin opened the panel discussion by explaining that September 11th provided an opportunity for a better understanding of Islam and prompted Americans to examine what made this tragedy possible. This critical examination of relations with the Muslim world brought some surprising findings. Contrary to what had previously been believed, these extremists were not raised in poverty and had knowledge of the United States and the West; their actions made it clear that the values of secular democracy are not universally shared. Chamberlain elaborated that the lack of commitment to secular democracy is not limited to the Muslim world, but is also shared by others, along with resentment of the U.S. support for Israel, for globalization, or for some corrupt capitalist or authoritarian regimes. Yet, there is a set of common values that the United States and the Muslim world share. Both believe in the value of human dignity, education, right to worship, and protection of minorities. The challenge that awaits our development community, noted Chamberlin, is to build upon what is shared and mutually respected and to design culturally sensitive programs that promote common values.

Chamberlin discussed examples of USAID projects that promote these common values. In Kosovo and Pakistan, for example, USAID supports legislation to address and criminalize trafficking in women and children. Civilian and community police issues are addressed by programs in Bosnia, Indonesia, and Nigeria. In Afghanistan, support is provided for employment of women in a factory.

Liz Cheney praised USAID's work in democracy and governance and said that the region in her portfolio, the Middle East and Israel, provides a significant challenge for promotion of democratic reforms. It is a region of critical diplomatic and security concerns, one ridden with political and economic challenges. There is not a single model of how change can be brought into and implemented in the Middle East. The changes are supported in the areas of private sector investment, economic diversification, and children's education. In addition to economic reforms, the political ones are needed as well. Cheney noted that people in the region—journalists, women, union leaders—are beginning to mobilize for change. Recent elections in Bahrain and Morocco, and Oman's announcement of universal suffrage are examples of changes that need support and assistance.

Cheney said that, under the leadership of Secretary of State Colin Powell, new U.S. initiatives are being put into place in the Middle East. The Administration will work with the governments and reformers in the region, U.S. Congress, and businesses toward progress in the Middle East. Cheney also mentioned a need to expand participation especially by women and the possibility of expanding free trade agreements to provide economic incentives. She talked about a need for funding programs that support democratic initiatives, such as initiatives leading to the creation of independent media, development of political parties, and education reforms including girls literacy. Considering that less than one percent of the Arab world has an internet connection and that only about 300 books are translated annually from English into Arabic, it is important to expand exposure of the people in the Middle East to the outside world.

The proposed Powell agenda is ambitious and requires a long-term commitment for structural change. But the proposed engagement in the Middle East is, according to Cheney, a sigh of hope not despair. The Administration's actions stem from a belief by the president that values of freedom apply to all people. When it comes to freedom, there is no clash of civilization.

Akbar Ahmed said that, while Cheney spoke of a dialogue between the United States and the Islamic world, his view of the relations between the two is more pessimistic. He sees the United States and the Islamic world as locked in an embrace, and, as some suggest, even a deadly one. While there are encouraging signs, such as President Bush's visit to the mosque, some fundamentalist Christian preachers in the United States continue to offend Muslims and their belief system. Ahmed noted that the impasse in the relations can be changed but it will be a long-term process and will require a comprehensive and wide-ranging approach.

Ahmed proposed six steps to improve relations between the United States and the Muslim world. The process has to start with the understanding of Islam and Muslim societies. With Arabs comprising 18 percent of the Muslim world, the United States should look beyond the Middle East to understand Islam. The limited understanding of Islam in the United States is coupled with the limited knowledge of democracy in the Muslim world.

Ahmed noted that the United States and the Muslim world share a passion for values of education. He postulated that curriculum changes are necessary to reform religious schools in villages to reflect a more mainstream Muslim thinking and to prevent the spread of the fundamentalist strain of Islam through them. In the United States, a more sensitive coverage of Islam should be encouraged. Ahmed observed that the media in the United States often spreads offensive views about Islam and does not show sensitivity about the Prophet. Media coverage lacks balance and perpetuates the impression that American citizens are against Islam. An increasing number of young men in the Muslim world are made restless by their inability to make meaningful contributions to their societies. Hence, Ahmed said, things need to be done to give them hope and opportunity for participation in society. Finally, the potential of the Muslim community in the United States to improve understanding of Islam here has not been realized. There are nearly seven million Muslims in the United States and efforts need to be made to engage them.

In the discussion period, Cheney stated that the State Department is looking at its programs in the Middle East to evaluate the appropriateness of U.S. assistance. Diplomatic dialogue and understanding the sensitivities of the issues are of utmost importance. Ahmed commented that a debate between the fundamentalists and the moderates over engagement with the West dates back to the mid-19th century. He added that the United States is already involved in it, and it should show its support for the views and actions of the moderates. Muslims, Ahmed continued, have several identities: ethnic, national, religious. Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda have successfully focused on religious identity and, unfortunately, the fundamentalist Christians' attack on Islam only reinforces this identity. Ahmed said that Egypt for the Arab world and Pakistan for South Asia could become models for modern Muslim states.

Chamberlin and Cheney were asked to comment on the differences in USAID and State Department approaches to assistance to Islamic countries. They both agreed that the approaches are complementary and crafted to particular countries. USAID programs emphasize common values with the Muslim world while the State Department is sometimes more stark with some governments and leaders.

Plenary: Pluralism, Democracy, and Governance in Islamic Societies

9:00-10:30 Friday, December 6, 2002

Concurrent Session: Radical Political Islam: Drivers and Donor Assistance

Speakers:

Ricki Gold, USAID Bureau for Asia and the Near East

Josh Kaufman, USAID DG Office

Lynn Carter, Management Systems International

Guilain Denoeux, Management Systems International

Graham Fuller, Management Systems International

This session explored radical Islamic movements and the possible roles that donor assistance can play in these country contexts. The session overviewed the drivers of radical Islam, both real and perceived, including globalization and cultural existential threat, U.S. foreign policy, poverty and the growing gap between rich and poor, political exclusion and repression, and the prevalence of corruption. The session explored various examples of governance in predominantly Islamic nations, why democratization is essential, what the risks are in opening these polities, and how these risks can be mitigated. The session briefly examined what programmatic challenges and options a USAID DG officer in the field might encounter.

After the tragedies of September 11th, USAID set up a series of seminars and discussion groups to examine these events in an attempt to understand why they happened, whether they could have been averted, and what, if any, is the role USAID programs can have to moderate radical Islam. Why is Islamic radicalism successful in some country contexts and not others? Is there something in the heart of Islam that leads to radicalism in certain circumstances? What are the drivers of radical Islam? Is it poverty, lack of access to education, inequality of classes, repressive governments, and/or political exclusion that contribute to radicalization of views?

Graham Fuller described how Islam is not necessarily the problem. He noted how most religions have violence or references to violence in their scriptures. For example, Christianity, with the crusades, inquisition, and other incidents has not always been a peaceful religion. The Quran establishes law, rights, and human protection, but like the Bible also has references that could be taken by more radical thinkers toward violent interpretations. Religion as such is not often the driver of violence or radicalism, but it is often the banner lifted in war. When any culture feels under attack, it "hunkers down" to defend itself and falls back on common cultural elements like religion. Religion becomes the conduit of radical reaction when cultures feel under attack.

Lynn Carter described other drivers of radical Islam. Globalization is seen as an external driver, as Muslims perceive inherent winners and losers with this phenomenon, with western influences being the winners and exploiters of poorer nations and regions. Cultural penetration of the west, with its perceived objectification of women, consumerism, and "incorrect behavior," and the Islamic loss of identity with this penetration is seen as a threat. U.S. policies toward Palestine, Chechnya, and other perceived exploitation are also seen as an external driver of radical Islam.

Guilain Denoeux sought to define and categorize "radical Islam." An operative definition could be political extremism with a religious edge. It seeks a radical restructuring of the socio-economic and political system with extreme violence as a justified means to achieve changes in structure. It also seeks to redefine Islam toward its "root origin" or most radical interpretation. Radical Islamists represent phenomena and groups that are not traditional, such as the 1979 radical Shiite revolution in Iran. There are many motivating factors to join radical Islam, like culture in Nigeria, occupation and resistance in Palestine, and schooling and political policies in Pakistan

and Saudi Arabia. Denoeux described the first generation of Islamic radicals that arose from the 1967 war and thrived in the 1980s and 1990s that directed their anger at their own governments and were more moderate in their beliefs. He compared the first generation to the second generation, which has a much more orthodox with strict views on issues of purity and morality. The latter is indisposed to women in public and favors strict shari'a. The "jihad" of these groups is seen as a global struggle and their anger is directed across borders to external elements.

In terms of external drivers, there is no evidence that poverty and inequality are key drivers of radicalism. Indeed, the majority of radical Islamists has proven to be of middle and upper classes, and from economically better off nations like Saudi Arabia and Egypt. Populist messages of revolt to economic oppressors that target the poor are not part of the radical Islamic rhetoric. If economic hardship is mentioned, it is normally accompanied by rebellion against political oppression or exclusion. Political exclusion, corruption, policy and political contexts have proven to be bigger external drivers than poverty.

Denoeux also compared Jordan and Morocco, where radicalism had not developed, and Algeria and Nigeria, where it has. He discussed five factors that differentiate these cases and may help to describe the differences. In Jordan and Morocco, the existence of institutional channels to air and discuss grievances helped mitigate radicalism. Also in Jordan and Morocco, explicit pacts between leaders and more radical opposition concerning control and the rules of the game were present. The political and negotiation skills of leaders and the development, the application of successful strategies toward the radical Islamic elements, and the existence of at least some perceived legitimacy of the state all helped mitigate radicalism.

Denoeux concluded that there is no inherent link between Islamic beliefs and political radicalism, although Islam provides a very effective tool to mobilize political action. Furthermore, the assumed connection between poverty, education and the strength of radical political movements is not so clear while the perceived degree of existential and cultural threat is a major factor producing radicalism. However, repressive, corrupt governments, rather than a lack of economic opportunity, do appear to be the other main factor driving radicalism.

Despite the evidence, participants cited the predominance of economic growth oriented programs in response to radicalizing Islam rather than political and social reform. Disempowerment and marginalization of peoples is the bigger driver of radical behavior.

One participant discussed the "Catch 22" faced by the development community, in that programs designed for empowerment of marginalized groups that have authoritarian tendencies could just lead to societies being taken over by radicals. How do we reconcile this possibility? Another audience participant discussed the loss of national and even ethnic identity in a lot of contexts as a contributing factor to people being subject to radical groups and influences.

In terms of programmatic options, a representative of USAID/Mali discussed how the mission had reached out to the religious schools to promote mutual human interest issues like HIV/AIDS awareness, education and other social issues. Participants highlighted cases like Yemen, where more radical parties were incorporated into democratic processes, such as legislative elections, and they did win office, but proceeded to fail to deliver while in office and were subsequently voted out. The message is that democracy does not necessarily need to be undermined in order to keep out voices of radicalism.

Plenary: Pluralism, Democracy, and Governance in Islamic Societies

9:00-10:30 Friday, December 6, 2002

Concurrent Session: Women's Political Participation

Moderator: Michaela Meehan, USAID DG Office

Speakers:

Maryam Montague, National Democratic Institute for International Affairs

Heba El-Kholy, United Nations Development Programme

Heba El-Shazli, National Democratic Institute for International Affairs/Lebanon

Michaela Meehan introduced the panel by stating how women's political participation in the Muslim world has been influenced by the attacks both in the United States and the war on terrorism in Afghanistan.

Maryam Montague began by asking if practitioners are thinking about their own agendas or the agendas of the women in their particular contexts. Do practitioners only look at one group of women in the particular context? Are practitioners working only with women from liberal leftist groups or are they working with veiled women from more religiously conservative groups? The former may be easier to work with, while the latter may be more representative of society.

Montague expressed hesitation over using "feminism" when promoting women's political participation since the word has a western history and applicability. Women's issues in the western historical tradition do not directly translate into the experiences of women and overall society in Islamic countries. The failure of practitioners to realize this may be misconstrued as an attempt to sell a U.S. model of feminism. Alignment with certain values is also important for organizations, and legislators within specific countries. Montague explained that several prominent groups and individuals capable of promoting women's political participation are looking for ways to align themselves with political development that does not place promotion of the goals of the U.S. government at the center of the agenda. If the goal of the U.S. government is democracy building, then we should consider other strategies of promoting political development and enhancing women's political participation. Montague noted that the experiences of several other countries were equally if not more impressive and offered important lessons learned. For example, the increase in women's political representation from 1 to 11 percent in Morocco is a fact that demands publicity and is useful to the development community.

Montague echoed the message from the plenary that practitioners need to pay attention to the Islamic faith, read the Quran, and incorporate Quranic interpretations that offer feminist and non-feminist perspectives. Drawing on the life of the Prophet Muhammad is also a good way of making DG issues pertinent to Islamic contexts. Montague went on to state that it is a myth that most Islamic parties and the religion of Islam are not democratic and want to keep women inside the domestic sphere. Montague noted that many of the myths about Islam and Islamic parties are mixed up in ideological campaigns funded by Saudi wealth and bolstered by Saudi interpretations, commonly Wahhabism, of Islam and women's rights. More progressive interpretations of women's rights do in fact exist but get poor media coverage in these ideological campaigns.

Montague stated that practitioners should encourage men to complement women's increased political participation instead of seeing themselves as competing against it. Practitioners should also set high criteria for participation, encourage partners to make sure women are present in meetings, be responsive to women's familial restraints, build confidence measures, and educate

women on traditional male areas of knowledge, such as defense, economy, and the military. Montague stressed the need to reinforce the image of women as mothers as this image has traditionally served as motivation for women's participation as voters. Another strategy practitioners need to consider is that, while specific gender programs are effective, women's political participation programming should be integrated into general DG programs.

Heba El-Kholy spoke first about the challenges and opposition facing women in the Arab and Muslim world. In the latest human development report from the UNDP, the Middle East scored the lowest out of seven regions for civil and religious freedoms and accountability. It also had the lowest rates of political representation for women with women prohibited from even standing for election in some countries. The lack of overall development in the Arab world is the reason for underdevelopment of women's issues.

El-Kholy also focused on the opportunities presently visible in the Arab world. Jordan, Qatar, Oman, and Syria are all countries with new and young leadership emerging that has already shown support for concrete reforms to women's rights and governance. Women in Egypt and Jordan have been given legal recourse for divorce and the first Ladies Summit in Jordan endorsed strategies for a regional lobby on women's issues. Support of advocacy and training for increased political participation of women reflects that moderate religious leaders and parliaments have begun working together. Successful UNDP programs in the region have registered women voters and trained women candidates. In Egypt, Lebanon, and Morocco, important women's NGOs have engaged with religious leaders to offer new interpretations of shari'a law. All of these changes and opportunities represent hope for women in the Middle East.

El-Kholy asked the audience to think further about what donors can do to promote women's political participation. She stated that donors adopt long-term goals and partner with credible and independent NGOs in the region. Women's groups will continue to be a thriving force in the Middle East and donors must sustain their support to them and for a greater south-south cooperation. In order to implement long-term goals, El-Kholy believes that donors and practitioners must dispel their misconceptions about the Muslim world.

El-Kholy added that advocacy for electoral quotas in terms of gender is essential for increasing women's political participation and representation. Tremendous internal support exists currently for electoral quotas in comparison to 10 years ago, and El-Kholy encouraged donors to take advantage of this reality. She suggested that donors could have engaged in more training of women politicians and education of women voters in Arab states giving women the rights to vote and run for office for the first time.

Heba el-Shazli said that in Bahrain and Yemen NDI met over 30 women elected to local councils who desired training in working better with fellow male members. These women had ardent interests in serving their communities and in attaining more information on the resources available to them as emerging political leaders.

Members of the audience had several questions regarding the expansion of women's political participation. First, what do we mean by women's political participation and, more specifically, what does it take for a woman to be elected? Does this mean practitioners should incorporate gender strategies into all DG programs? Additionally, several participants stated that practitioners need to better distinguish between women's issues and general social issues.

El-Shazli commented that having more women elected into office and in mainstream political structures does not necessarily translate into greater support of women's issues at a mainstream level. Montague added that in legislatures and national governments there are strong perceptions that women care more about certain social issues and men care more about issues in the area of defense and the military. The speakers agreed that this was precisely why the development community needed to promote women's leadership at various levels of government and encourage women to support all kinds of issues.

Plenary: Pluralism, Democracy and Governance in Islamic Societies

9:00-10:30 Friday, December 6, 2002

Concurrent Session: Media in Islamic Societies

Moderator: James Clad, USAID Bureau for Policy and Program Coordination

Speakers:

Mustafa Malik, German Marshall Fund

Jon Alterman, Center for Strategic & International Studies

Mouafac Harb, Radio SAWA

James Clad began with a brief introduction to media in predominantly Muslim countries. The rapid expansion of media outlets, ranging from satellite television to the internet, during the past decade has resulted in a vast number of new sources of information for the Islamic world. The media expansion has also helped to create a Muslim identity by focusing attention on stories about the Palestinian Intifada and with Muslim journalists, like journalists everywhere, using emotional “hooks” to pull in their audience. This has resulted in some rethinking among analysts who had assumed that “free media” in the Arabic world would bring about a wave of reforms similar to those that previously swept through Eastern Europe.

Jon Alterman began by stating that, despite the fact that there are now over 200 Arabic language television stations available via satellite, few of them are making money and all need either government backing or the backing of wealthy government supporters in order to survive. There is a tendency to avoid programming that would endanger this support. For example, in the mid-1990s, the media showed promise of promoting a dialogue between Arabs and Israelis. This has pretty much evaporated. Instead, the stations air programming that tends to propagate a sense of solidarity. The most popular show in the Arab world at this time is a version of the game show, “Who Wants to be a Millionaire?” While this might, at first, seem to be indicative of western influence, the questions focus closely on Arabic culture and thus contribute to solidifying the sense of Arab identity.

Arab solidarity has tended to be an end in itself and little effort has been made to use the media to address internal problems. First, television is largely an entertainment media and thus unlikely to focus on reform. Stations also tend to have a regional focus, aiming at a cross-national audience. Governments are a major player in the industry, seeking to limit, not increase, public participation. The Arab public is also cynical about media messages. They have been lied to by the media so many times that significant trust-building efforts will be required before the media will be taken seriously. Fear and self-censorship are also factors, contributing to the public's cynicism.

Alterman concluded by noting that freer media has had at least one positive impact in that it severely hampers the ability of the governments to censor all sources of information. To date, satellite television and other media sources have not had a major impact on governments, so we need to further examine the conditions under which it could have an greater impact.

Mouafac Harb noted that a huge gap exists between Arab media consumers and the domestic Arabic media outlets. Currently, Arab consumers are not being well served, since the domestic media is strictly controlled by governments. Harb stressed that all Arab media outlets, even non-domestic outlets like satellite TV networks, are still owned by the state. Media in the Arab world is not yet an industry. Most journalists are well-trained, but the enabling environment limits their ability to report in an unbiased fashion.

Harb detailed two different forms of control. The first is direct control by state ministers and intelligence agencies. The second, less obvious, form of control is through the manipulation of commercial revenues. Governments also control the advertising agencies, so independent media outlets must stay in the government's good graces in order to survive.

A new project, Radio SAWA, is an attempt to pull in a younger group of listeners than is typically reached by Voice of America, which is simply not drawing an audience. The focus is on American pop culture, a topic high in demand amongst younger audiences. SAWA has a Voice of America charter and is funded by the U.S. government.

Having studied Turkish media for many years, Mustafa Malik expressed his surprise at the increased professionalization in that media over the past few decades. In the 1970s, he noted, newspapers looked more like association newsletters. The technical aspects have improved considerably, but the public still does not trust its own media outlets due to concerns over governmental control. The public tends instead to turn to outside sources for accurate information.

It is generally accepted that a free media cannot survive without democracy. The case of Turkey is somewhat ironic, because, despite being very democratic in some aspects, the government has not extended this freedom to the media. Despite the controls, change is seeping in to the country. Greater transportation between areas leads people to question much of what they see in the newspapers and pressure from younger, better informed people is pushing the media toward professionalization.

Malik stated that one form of aid—giving fellowships to journalists—is generally a bad idea. He noted that of the three individuals he knows who received these fellowships, all have stayed in this country. He recommends instead short-term courses on specific issues, increasing support for individual journalists who run afoul of their governments, support for journalist associations, and very brief visits to U.S. media outlets.

The floor was then opened for questions. One listener inquired whether journalists in the Arab world were generally annoyed at the restrictions under which they worked, noting that this had been a successful “wedge” for engineering reform in other regions. Alterman answered that many journalists were indeed chafing under the restrictions. Malik added that he hoped that building a sense of journalistic pride might be a way for outside journalists to help influence change.

Another participant asked to what degree Arabic media was willing to focus on religious debate and different interpretations of Islam. Alterman commented that there was a very strong aversion to this sort of discussion and that religious programming in the Arab world is very monolithic. The participant then asked whether promoting an open debate about religion and emphasizing that there can be different views of Islam might be helpful in promoting openness. Alterman agreed that it could, but Malik strongly dissented, stating that this is not a religious issue and encouraging debate on that topic would be of little use.

Harb addressed a question posed by several participants on the general perception that Radio SAWA is, like all Arabic media, government controlled—only, in this case, controlled by the United States. He stressed the difference between state-funded and -controlled, and noted that although SAWA does not want to be perceived as a U.S. propaganda outlet, this has been a concern from the time of its inception.

Plenary: Pluralism, Democracy and Governance in Islamic Societies

9:00-10:30 Friday, December 6, 2002

Concurrent Session: Rule of Law: The Intersection of Shari'a and Secular Law

Moderator: Keith Schulz, USAID DG Office

Speakers:

Nat Brown, George Washington University

Erik Jensen, The Asia Foundation/Stanford University

Nat Brown opened the session by introducing the relationship between Islamic (shari'a) and secular law, and providing insight on the evolution of that relationship. Shari'a was originally conceived of as a set of institutions and practices, not only as "law," and its main mode of transmission has been through a "fatwah," which is essentially an expert opinion by eminent legal scholars. Though shari'a originally operated autonomously from the government, throughout the years, Muslim political systems exerted more control over the law through secular legislation and state regulations. These supplemented rather than abolished shari'a, and the two bodies of law operated side-by-side. However, the jurisdiction gradually shifted with secular law encroaching on the autonomy of religious law, a process that was not vehemently protested due to the fact that the autonomy of shari'a was not compromised. By the 20th century, three kinds of development had taken place. First, there was an amalgamation of the two systems, in which shari'a was absorbed by secular law, as in Egypt, Kuwait, and Tunisia. Second, there was bureaucratization of the shari'a system, in which the state regulates shari'a institutions, as in Saudi Arabia. Third, state control over Islamic learning institutions emerged.

Brown asserts that, while in theory there is space for liberalization, in practice a merging of shari'a and liberal ideas has been almost impossible. He suggests constitutional and administrative law as possible areas of overlap for liberal and shari'a systems. Though the United States is interested in fostering this merge, it can only be a spectator in an intra-Muslim dialogue.

Following this introduction, participants raised several points. They noted that shari'a itself is not monolithic and that there are, in fact, several schools of thought. Additionally, there has been a democratization of Islamic legal thinking. This had led to debate over who has the authority to issue fatwahs. One contentious issue is how to bring shari'a in line with international human rights instruments. Though many thinkers are engaged in this debate, who has the authority to make it stick is a key unresolved point.

Erik Jensen believes that mainstream rule of law workers often hold the view that they must either support secular law in courts, or risk shari'a impeding on modernity. This view is mistaken for several reasons. It is too monolithic an interpretation of shari'a. It overestimates secular courts and does not take into account the limited access of courts, and the inability to mete out justice, among other issues. It conflates shari'a with traditionalism. Instead of focusing only on shari'a, customary law should also be taken into account. This system of local bodies dispensing local justice can result in both a perversion of Islamic law and/or an avoidance of Islamic law.

Jensen sees four possible programmatic responses to shari'a:

1. The pragmatist: Islam is "a potent part of local idiom" and I should understand how it is used

2. The reluctant pragmatist: I wish Islam were not a part of the local idiom, but since it is, I should understand it
3. The devout secularist: Religion and law do not mix
4. Anti-Islam: Secular legal institutions must be strengthened to prevent the encroachment of Islam

Several comments and questions arose during the discussion period. A discussant with extensive Latin America experience reminded the group that the idea of separation of church and state is a very American one, and that it is possible for religion and democracy to co-exist. Also, the question of legal pluralism is not specific to shari'a, but comes up in other parts of the world with indigenous laws as well. The challenge is to search for democratic inclusion of legal pluralism.

A question was raised regarding the intersection of shari'a and secular law as it pertains to NGOs and other charitable organizations. It was agreed by the discussants that this is a particularly tangled area that has yet to be resolved.

The panelists were asked to discuss constitutional models for ethnically and religiously diverse countries like Nigeria. Both panelists agreed that the constitution is not necessarily the best place to look for models, as many of these issues lie outside the domain of the constitution and is governed instead by personal status laws. In response to a comment that personal status laws can be highly politicized and manipulated, the panelists argued that this is not strictly an Islamic issue. This kind of corruption of law is a matter of politics, economics, governance, etc and happens almost everywhere. We must be careful to understand the entire picture and not automatically attribute these problems to shari'a.

The panel ended with a discussion of other resources on this topic and an emphasis on the need for all of us to have a better understanding of Islam. For too long, the debate has been couched in terms of "us" versus "them", "Islamic views" versus "international views." A better understanding of Islam would help us move away from such narrow thinking.

Plenary: Pluralism, Democracy and Governance in Islamic Societies

9:00-10:30 Friday, December 6, 2002

Concurrent Session: Democracy Building in Muslim Minority and Majority Regions

Moderator: Georges Fauriol, International Republican Institute

Speakers:

Gretchen Birkle, International Republican Institute

Robert Wuertz, USAID/Philippines

Drawing primarily on the International Republican Institute's (IRI) experiences in Nigeria and Russia, this theme was shaped by the interaction between religion and ethnicity. How do governments address pressing religious and ethnic issues without alienating a significant portion of the Muslim population and angering its Muslim neighbors? What roles do economic and regional stability and varying levels of federated regional political relationships (Muslim and non-Muslim) play? Related to this are the core concerns of politics and autonomy and how government offers communities with large Muslim and other ethnic minorities equal protection and representation under one legal system.

Gretchen Birkle concentrated her remarks on the areas of the Russian federation, where Muslims constitute the largest religious minority. She noted three important factors to consider in programming there: (1) the rise of radical Islam throughout the region and what is being done to counter this rise, (2) inter-ethnic conflict in the region, which has historically suffered from great upheaval, and (3) the reemphasis of central power in Moscow, being undertaken by Vladimir Putin, which has repercussions not only for the Muslim populations.

In developing ideas for a democratic approach in Russia, IRI developed a strategic plan to reach out to Muslim communities and to address the gap between democratic development in Muslim parts of Russia and the rest of the country. This approach included a survey of basic democratic principles, acknowledged basic concepts found in the Muslim community so as to incorporate them into the plan, transcended clan-based politics, dealt with issue-based movements, and opened dialogue with those communities that had not been the focus of democracy outreach

The presentation was followed by a discussion session where a participant asked how to ensure that the informant community is reflective of the greater population. Birkle said that IRI looks to its staff on the ground to make an informed assessment. She also noted that IRI is developing a toolbox for identifying key stakeholders that would be reevaluated periodically to confirm initial findings.

Another participant noted that, in these regions, there historically were official muftis appointed by the central government. He asked if IRI was working with them. Birkle answered that IRI has not formally reached out to them, but rather focused more on political leaders.

A final question was asked whether IRI is facing new skepticism of its work from the national government following the Moscow theatre incident. Birkle replied that there has been no different reaction.

Robert Wuertz began his comments by emphasizing that what is often characterized as religious tension is often a mask for more complex and deeper ethnic or socio-economic tensions. He spoke specifically of his current experiences in the Philippines, particularly in regard to the Mindanao province. This region has dealt with the tensions by attempting to carve

out a semi-autonomous area within the Philippines. Here shari'a and secular law work in tandem, with litigants having a choice of which legal system to refer a complaint to. Wuertz noted that, so far, the situation has worked out reasonably well, although "court-shopping" for the best deal is happening with increased frequency. For the most part, however, the people of Mindanao have not reverted to either the shari'a or secular legal system, but have continued to rely on the traditional conflict resolution means offered by the local-level barangays. Wuertz used this point to support Birkle's conclusion that the way USAID can have the most success working in these situations is to focus on the secular in our programming responses.

Georges Fauriol added that the case of Nigeria supports the Philippines and Russian examples, offering a "mosaic approach" with dual use of shari'a and secular law to meet the legal needs of a diverse population.

A member of the audience commented that the presenters might be misguided in supporting this secular-focused approach to programming. He noted that, in the Arab world, much success has been found by including Islamists into the political processes, as exclusion would likely have led to greater radicalization.

Another participant asked whether decentralization would serve as a model for addressing the needs of minority populations. The following discussion pointed out that, while there are benefits to this approach, one real downside is the increased need to control corruption as revenues are channeled from the central government to the local one. If that can be accomplished, then decentralization could be aid in mitigating conflict; otherwise, there would likely be a further increase in tensions.

A discussant closed the session by remarking on the example of Nigeria. He shared the presenters' views that oftentimes the religious strife is a cover for more deep-seated concerns. With Nigeria, the challenge was to address people who were feeling alienated by the central leadership. This is particularly vital in the northern area, which is now under shari'a, where people are largely peasants and feel excluded from the national government. Shari'a rule then became "a promise of something better" for them.

Plenary: Strategies for Promoting the Democratic Middle

1:45-3:15 Friday, December 6, 2002

Moderator: Les Campbell, National Democratic Institute for International Affairs

Speakers:

Owen Kirby, International Republican Institute

Heba El-Shazli, National Democratic Institute for International Affairs

Doug Ramage, The Asia Foundation

Much of the Islamic world is caught in a destabilizing cycle of authoritarianism that breeds radicalism. The polarization of political life, characterized by economic disparity and by sharp cleavages between secular and religious forces, and between ruling elites and civil society, has only reinforced extremism.

The promotion of a democratic middle ground that has typically been marginalized could offer viable political alternatives.

Les Campbell opened the plenary with remarks on the history of NDI's involvement in the Middle East from the early 1990s. Through its experience, NDI identified the mosque as an important outlet of political expression. This work also clarified that most people in the region were not attracted to either the extreme of an autocratic, secular state or of a strong theocracy. Instead, most supported a "democratic middle," which is where the institute has focused its regional work.

The panel took up this definition, asking who comprises this democratic middle, how to determine participation, and how to develop programs to support it. It addressed specific strategies to support the development of the democratic middle that include identifying its sources, targeting women and youth, supporting representative political parties, and promoting informal or associational democracy.

Doug Ramage discussed some of The Asia Foundation's (TAF) work in Indonesia, noting several strategies for strengthening democracy through the language and networks of Islam. Democracy is strengthened by concentrating on a long-term approach, building trust through community development, a commitment to understand history and culture of each country, and working with Muslim groups from non-DG sectors for democracy supporting ends. For example, Ramage commented that secular and religious groups in Indonesia have historically been deeply intertwined. During the independence movement, the religious groups strongly opposed the establishment of a religious state.

Since September 11, much attention has been focused on radical Islamic groups in Indonesia. Unfortunately, this has come at the expense of long-standing moderate groups. The development community continues to ask where the moderate voice has gone. In an effort to promote a more holistic view of Islam, USAID/Indonesia supported a public relations campaign called "Islam is Not One," which was widely broadcast on television.

Heba El-Shazli shared with the audience her experience working on democratization in the Middle East, with special focus on women and youth as agents of democratic change. Women and youth deserve focused attention to ensure equal participation of all citizens, to support a diffusion of power, and to reflect the role of youth as society's future.

The Middle East region has the largest percentage of youth under the age of 14. These youth are currently in school, but will shortly be in need of jobs, resulting in high volatility if this need is

not met. Fifty percent of women in the Arab world cannot read or write. Changing their economic situation alone will not automatically improve social and political opportunities. El-Shazli emphasized that the culture is conservative no matter what the religion and that culture varies from country to country. Based on these factors, she recommended several foci for programming for the region:

- Enabling an environment for women and youth to participate
- Shifting adult percept of youth
- Changing youth's attitudes toward adults
- Choosing to take risks
- Recognizing the centrality of the media
- Working with NGOs
- Pressuring male leadership
- Improving the consistency of policy formulation and implementation
- Undertaking steps to help women get to know each other within the region

Owen Kirby used his presentation to highlight polling, an area of programming in IRI has a wealth of experience. Polling has now become an integral part of IRI programming throughout the Middle East and North Africa. It has become an important source of voter profiles and electoral intent for government and political parties, informing these sources about citizens' most important interests.

Polling provides an opportunity for people to represent views anonymously and freely. It is a process not normally available to the citizenry. It also serves as a strong check on authoritarianism by the government. Morocco and West Bank/Gaza have been two of the most recent sites where IRI has worked on polling activities. Kirby noted that polling has become so common in the West Bank/Gaza that important findings are often not reported on by international media.

Plenary: Strategies for Promoting the Democratic Middle

1:45-3:15 Friday, December 6, 2002

Concurrent Session: Programming in the Democratic Middle: Bangladesh, Yemen, and Indonesia

Moderator: Les Campbell, National Democratic Institute for International Affairs

Speakers:

Jim Oliver, National Democratic Institute for International Affairs

Robin Madrid, National Democratic Institute for International Affairs

Tim Ryan, American Center for International Labor Solidarity

Les Campbell suggested that the panelists expand on the topics discussed in the plenary session on pluralism, democracy and governance in Islamic societies and talk about the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) and the American Center for International Labor Solidarity (ACILS) programs in Bangladesh, Yemen, and Indonesia. Jim Oliver opened his presentation by discussing conditions that make programs meaningful, democratic, and inclusive. He stressed the importance of staff buy-in into the vision of the program and good understanding of local conditions. He noted that keeping up with local news, respecting hosts' cultures, and observing local protocols is invaluable for the establishment of good working relationships with local partners as well as local powers. Oliver also said that principles of neutrality and impartiality ought to be observed and that it is best to stay out of the news and spotlight and work informally behind the scenes. At times, access to consultants who have connections to the government is also helpful.

Oliver continued by describing a program of study circles in Bangladesh. Study circles are a vehicle for ordinary citizens to share their views and contribute to the democratic culture through a simple but disciplined system of structured conversations. Study circles were developed in Bangladesh with NDI's assistance to compensate for the shortcomings of the underdeveloped political system. Although, after 3 elections cycles, the mechanisms of peaceful transfer of power are institutionalized, the law and order conditions are deteriorating and the local government is increasingly failing in service delivery. Political party system is ridden with problems, parliamentary initiatives are not acted upon, and parliamentary committees are not formed. Hence, the study circles are providing an opportunity to work on the grassroots initiatives and to focus on building trust and developing individual contacts for the future.

In the final section of his remarks, Oliver talked about the design of party programs. He said that it is often easier and more productive to start discussing reforms on the periphery, to target the local level and work on the improved communication with and among the leadership, candidate selection, and constituent relations. He also pointed out the need for the initial assessment of the membership campaigns and outreach to new party membership.

Robin Madrid reviewed NDI's programs working with women members of the newly elected local councils in Yemen. There are 36 women in over 6,000 councils in Yemen. Most of these women run as independents not because the established political parties were hostile to female candidates, but because the parties did not perceive them as viable candidates. More women were elected in the south of the country where there is more openness and a stronger civil society.

The program to assist women council members was set up in February 2001 in response to a need for support and training on the role of the councils and issues about organization of these institutions. NDI stepped out of women-specific programs because of the great need for support in institution building. In regard to party programs in Yemen, Madrid stressed the importance of

training at the local level, creating conditions for bringing more female candidates, and improving the implementation of ideas and by-laws that exist on paper. NDI is working with party committees to develop better networking opportunities for women and bring more of them to the trainings.

Before focusing on ACILS's programs in Indonesia, Tim Ryan spoke about the differences between trade unions and other NGOs. Trade unions are mass-based and engagement oriented due to the goal of negotiating contracts for their members with the management. In some countries, including Indonesia under the Suharto regime, unions act as *de facto* opposition movement. National trade unions have connections with the international labor movement which gives them an externality of perception. In the context of DG programming, trade unions play a dual role in that they are active members of civil society while also being involved in the economic sphere.

The political transition in Indonesia, after Suharto's fall from power in 1998, marked a shift for the trade unions from acting as political opposition to getting engaged on the issues of social justice, including improvement of position of women. ACILS programs in Indonesia are designed to improve trade union professionalism. Ryan said that the challenge is to transform the unions used to confronting the regime as an opposition force into a professional, well managed organization that aims at improving industrial relations in Indonesia. Unions receive assistance to improve their ability to build coalitions with other institutions of civil society. For example, unions were involved in monitoring elections with other NGOs, union networks were utilized to get information and education on the election rules and procedures out to the voters. Unions are also working and building networks with NGOs involved in anti-trafficking and child labor. Labor law reform is an important area of ACILS involvement where ACILS helps to build capacity of NGOs to lobby the parliament. Ryan acknowledged that the lobbying by NGOs worked only to a point. Due to a change in the government the laws went back to the drawing board, but the capacity of NGOs stayed with them to continue the efforts.

In the discussion that followed the presentations, the panelists were asked to address the issue of parties that have difficulty accepting an open political system and the parties that seem unable to work with their own members. Madrid replied that building stable, reliable institutions is important. Party competition is often linked to the history of party fighting and violence, but if there is a system of institutions, these problems can be addressed within their frameworks. Oliver suggested working with the moderates in the parties, encouraging them to challenge the leadership.

Plenary: Strategies for Promoting the Democratic Middle

1:45-3:15 Friday, December 6, 2002

Concurrent Session: Promoting the Democratic Middle: Lebanon and Indonesia, and Promoting Judicial Independence in the Middle East

Moderator: Owen Kirby, International Republican Institute

Speakers:

Barbara Bartlouni, AMIDEAST/Lebanon

Doug Ramage, The Asia Foundation

Anthony Bowyer, International Foundation for Election Systems

Barbara Batlouni described the AMIDEAST/Lebanon mission's investment in journalism training in various Lebanese provinces and funding the automation of Beirut municipalities for benchmark polling. As the mission started this programming with OTI funds, the initial criteria pertained to short-term impacts, taking risks, and working with young people and activists. Initial programming spanned 28 projects and took one year to get started.

Batlouni stated that a main challenge of early programming was helping local leaders and activists learn concepts of transparency and accountability and then helping them conceptualize projects without dictating to them what they need to do. Most of the groups receiving small grants worked on traditional socio-development projects. The mission found it productive to encourage them to start incorporating the new theme of anti-corruption into their work. Another challenge was the war on terrorism in Afghanistan and changes in U.S. foreign policy which led to increased anger and frustration in Lebanon, posing the additional challenge of channeling grant applications from indigenous organizations who were increasingly reluctant to work with donors from the United States. The only organization receiving a grant at that time asked for funding to be cancelled. Later, when the United States gave support to Israeli military action in West Bank/Gaza, the presence of USAID logos on project outputs also became problematic. The tight timeframe of programming and the establishment of short-term goals and results proved additional challenges. Additionally, grant criteria forbidding AMIDEAST from bearing specific core costs also posed a problem other donors do not regularly face.

Batlouni noted that several synergies were created in the span of programming and each group receiving grants worked in more than one DG sub-sector. AMIDEAST/Lebanon also engaged in positive capacity building with OTI. These were two beneficial approaches to promoting democracy and governance in Lebanon. Another positive effect of programming was that the allocation of small grants to various organizations fostered competition within and between organizations. For example, when the Ministry of Finance successfully published a book on inheritance procedures, other departments of the government wanted to try something similar.

Doug Ramage spoke on changes in the programming environment after the September 11th attacks and highlighted areas where practitioners should work with religious organizations in Asian and Islamic societies in particular. Ramage noted that the problem of violence and separatism in Islamic societies is not always linked to religion. For example, the province of Aceh in Indonesia has high separatist elements but most of the political frustration pertains to government brutality. Furthermore, in several Islamic societies, women's organizations have offered technical assistance for gender sensitive interpretations of shari'a.

Civic education is an area where programming has definitely changed in light of the war on terrorism and rising Islamic militancy worldwide. Ramage elaborated on TAF programming in Indonesia that worked with Muhammadiyah, a 6 to 8 million member organization promoting

messages of peace and tolerance through sermons at mosques, youth wings, and writing and distribution of leaflets by Muslim scholars on Islam and tolerance. TAF also recommended for Muslim organizations in the Maluku province to start their own peace campaign to combat the problem of Islamic militancy in the area. Ramage noted that some organizations sought the support of trendy magazines to promote their ideas of Islam and tolerance to younger populations. Targeting youth is especially important in Indonesia as the *pestantren*, or boarding schools, reflect little diversity and offer a limited education in terms of disciplines. Ramage emphasized the need for more public and private initiatives aimed at curriculum reform. An example of a proposed initiative is that of Indonesian and Malaysian curriculum reformers who want to travel to Pakistan to help educators reform their curriculum and make it more comprehensive in terms of what disciplines to teach and how to include religion in the subject matter.

Another problem that needs to be focused on in programming is the use and function of the mass media. Several radical and militant Muslim organizations are savvy in their use of mass media, especially tabloid magazines. They also have large funding bases to circulate print materials promoting their messages. The problem with the intellectuals and pluralists in Islamic societies is that they often use language that people do not understand, thereby alienating themselves and their message from mainstream populations. Above all, women's rights are always the first place of contention. Orthodox interpretations of Islam have continuously attempted to marginalize the role of women. Ramage stated that donors should sponsor local organizations that sanction women friendly translations of the Quran and have women's groups participation in the codification of shari'a.

Anthony Bowyer outlined the various political cleavages in the area of democracy and governance in Tajikistan, including regional, ideological, ethnic, economic, educational, and generational. He also explained ongoing government struggles over political legitimacy, economic collapse, regionalism, search for national identity, and security issues.

In terms of lessons learned, practitioners need to empower stakeholders to promote activism and outreach. They need to make political parties realize that it is to their benefit to reach women and youth. They must develop civic education textbooks that cultivate understanding of democracy and its benefits. Practitioners need to allay the fears of many citizens and organizations that democracy is a threat and may lead the state into chaos. Bowyer concluded by stating that there is a battle for influence taking place in Tajikistan. We need to encourage political parties to not give up in the political process. USAID needs to have a long term presence in Tajikistan because the country, though weak, is not a failed state and does have a promising future with a hopeful younger generation.

An audience participant asked Batlouni of her impression on the theme of engaging Islam in development. He further inquired about the boundaries between practitioner's interests in engaging Islam and the limitations posed by U.S. embassies and foreign policies. Batlouni replied that donors are prohibited from making grants to organizations that are on the Department of State's list of potential threats to U.S. interests. She noted that these organizations are less likely to work with the U.S. government anyway because of their own constituencies.

Plenary: Strategies for Promoting the Democratic Middle

1:45-3:15 Friday, December 6, 2002

Concurrent Session: Democracy Building Through Civic Education: Case Studies from Indonesia, Pakistan, and Jordan

Moderator: Gary Hansen, USAID DG Office

Speakers:

Pam Coughlin, Children's Resources International

Ron Morris, Center for Civic Education

Beth Farnbach, Center for Civic Education

Gary Hansen provided a brief overview of civic culture, which became a subject of considerable academic interest beginning in the 1950s and 1960s in the United States. Works by authors such as Almond and Verba suggested that it was important to create a civic culture in order to ensure public participation. In the past decade or so there has been a resurgence of interest in civic culture, as evidenced in the writings of Robert Putnam and in recent work by the World Bank. USAID has been focusing on civic culture for several decades now. As the recent DG Office publication, "Approaches to Civic Education," suggests, it is possible to increase participation among adults, but very difficult to affect changes in values and attitudes. To foster value and belief changes, it may be necessary to start very young through a program of civic education. Hansen stressed, however, that the static and boring programs that we think of as "civics" bear little resemblance to the programs being implemented by the two organizations on the panel.

Pam Coughlin introduced the first program launched by Children's Resources International (CRI), an organization that began working in the area of civic education in Eastern Europe in the early 1990s. The central principle of its early childhood education program was to create a child-centered and democratic classroom where children learn the value of participation and many of the "road-rules" of democracy. Coughlin noted that there is a direct link between early childhood education and democratic development—not just for the children involved in the program, but also for their teachers and parents who absorb many of the democratic values as they assist in the classroom.

Coughlin presented a video recently created by CRI, which gives a before and after view of a classroom in Pakistan. The classroom before the CRI intervention was very bleak and colorless. Teachers used the rote memorization method and children were forced to kneel on a cold, bare floor as they recited their lessons. With a minimal investment of funds and several volunteers, CRI was able to purchase rugs for the floors and a collection of learning tools, apply brightly colored paints to the walls of the building, and train teachers to use child-centered methods in the classroom. The "after" portion of the video showed children who were much more interested in learning and parents who were actively involved in the classroom.

CRI focuses on early education—mostly kindergarten and first-grade. Kindergarten programs are usually easier to institute, according to Coughlin, because they fall under the official radar of the school systems. In response to a question from the audience, she noted that it is not necessarily harder to begin these programs in Muslim countries, but additional time is usually needed to get the program started and to get parents involved. In closing, Coughlin added that the key to these programs is the attitude that teachers have toward the students—treating children with respect and giving them choices enables them to grow into citizens who respect and practice democratic values.

The second presentation, by Ron Morris and Beth Farnbach, examined the success of the Center for Civic Education's pilot program in Indonesia. The goal of the center's programs, both within the United States and internationally, is to promote an enlightened and responsible citizenry that is committed to democratic principles and actively engaged in the practice of democracy. Project Citizen, one of the Center's most successful endeavors, is a portfolio-based civic education program for grades 5-12. The focus is on interdisciplinary, cooperative learning, where students apply what they have learned to real policy issues at the local and state levels of government.

Project Citizen currently operates in Africa, Asia, Europe, North America, and South America and has been translated into many languages. The program in Indonesia is similar in many ways to those that have been started in other countries. The first step is to teach a group of regional trainers, who then go out and instruct local teachers on how to use participatory methods in the classroom. Under the guidance of their teacher, students develop a list of problems in the community—violence, drug use, teenage pregnancy, and so forth. They then vote on which problem to address in their project. After the problem has been selected, students conduct research using the internet (where available), newspapers, and interviews with local officials. After they have gathered their information, they work as a class to develop strategies and policy, and to prepare an action plan. The portfolios are submitted to a local competition where they are judged by a panel of officials. The best portfolios are then selected to move on to regional and then national levels of the competition.

The program in Indonesia is still in the early stages, but a similar program in Jordan has produced excellent results, several of which were unexpected. The Jordanian project was initially restricted to a handful of private schools, but the Ministry of Education was so impressed with the results that the program has been adopted for use in all public schools. Instructors of the program also decided to form a regional association for civic education teachers so that they could share materials and conduct research. USAID sponsored an organizing conference to launch this new association in the fall of 2002. Representatives from eight Arab countries, including some ministers and NGOs, discussed an international framework for ideas on civic education, shared their successes and challenges, and drafted the documents necessary to form a civic education association.

There were several questions from the audience, many of which focused on the role of the teacher in these classrooms. One listener wondered whether these more participatory methods were eagerly embraced by teachers, especially in cases where they had lived most of their lives in a non-democratic society. Another asked whether teachers were discouraged when they discovered that participatory learning generally means a greater workload for the same amount of pay. Coughlin answered that she had heard complaints of this nature, but despite some grumbling, teachers do not go back to their old methods of teaching and most say that they couldn't imagine teaching any other way. Another presenter added that parents usually do not want their children back in a traditional classroom once they see the results produced by the more participatory methods. One way of resolving problems of this nature is to begin working with the colleges that currently train teachers in the rote method and get them to include participatory teaching methods in their curricula.

Plenary: Strategies for Promoting the Democratic Middle

1:45-3:15 Friday, December 6, 2002

Concurrent Session: From the Ground Up: Fostering Democratization through Participatory Governance at the Local Level

Moderator: Gary Bland, Research Triangle Institute

Speakers:

Christian Arandel, Research Triangle Institute

Peter Malnak, USAID/West Bank/Gaza

John Wegge, USAID/Indonesia

Gary Bland introduced three questions guiding the discussion of fostering democratization through participatory governance at the local level. What role can local government play in the Muslim world? Can local democratic government efforts be sustainable in non-democratic systems? Can local efforts trickle up to the national level?

Christian Arandel addressed promotion of democracy at the local level, drawing on his experiences in the Middle East and North Africa region. Key issues that he identified for this were

- Overcoming resistance to participatory government (both at the local and national levels)
- Acknowledging the limited capacities of municipalities
- Using consultants as facilitators only
- Overcoming inherent and open conflicts
- Managing work in conservative societies
- Recognizing that transparency is a rarely practiced way of life
- Building and maintaining trust
- Institutionalizing participation
- Scaling up in order to have policy impact

Conclusions that Arandel drew pointed to realization that a slow paradigm shift is taking place regarding the role of local governments. There is also increased awareness that government must be effective at the local level. However, the link between good local governance and development is not always made, and work does need to be done on making this connection.

Peter Malnak reviewed the situation of USAID local government activities in the Palestinian autonomous areas of the West Bank/Gaza. The Palestinian example highlighted two important points for the larger discussion. The first is that it illustrates a situation with strong local governments coming into conflict with weaker national government. While the issue has not been resolved in this case, it is an important factor to consider in local governance programming and one in which more research should be focused. Malnak also pointed to the necessity of backing up local governments with the financial means to implement its activities. For the West Bank/Gaza, tax receipts have been frozen by Israel since September 2000, leaving the strong local governments without the funds to carry out their projects.

John Wegge presented a policy matrix for decentralized and effective local governance, and reviewed USAID/Indonesia's programs to support the development of effective, participatory, local government. He also addressed the issue of token participation in local government activities, stressing that local governments are responsible for getting the work done, particularly during times of conflict.

Plenary: Strategies for Promoting the Democratic Middle

1:45-3:15 Friday, December 6, 2002

Concurrent Session: Transnational Tides and Sandcastles: DG Programming in the Middle East

Moderator: Amy Hawthorne, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

Speakers:

Robert Springborg, University of London

Guilain Denoeux, Management Systems International, Inc.

Rhys Payne, ARD Inc.

The purpose of the panel was to examine principles of democracy programming in the Middle East and the relationship between political and economic change. Speakers presented their views on the latest thinking about the region as well as lessons learned from past programming efforts. The theory that economic liberalization will lead to political reform was questioned. Panelists also advocated keeping a low donor profile and scaling back expectations.

Amy Hawthorne explained that in the post-September 11 world, there is now a consensus on the need to work on democracy programming in the Middle East. The conditions that make working in the region difficult have not changed, however. These conditions includes the complex relationship between political and economic reform, the presence of radical Islam, and the challenge of what is the best way for USAID to approach programming. Should USAID use a direct or indirect approach and where are the entry points for programming?

Guilain Denoeux explained that USAID originally saw democracy programming as a way of eliminating barriers to economic growth. Now the reverse idea that people think liberalized trade and economic growth will lead to democracy is gaining ground. Denoeux listed reasons why this theory is taking hold. First, as the United States becomes more concerned with maintaining relationships in the region for the fight on terrorism, there is greater reluctance to press for democracy goals. Second, the alternatives to current regimes are usually not pro-United States, and may be more authoritarian than current governments. Third, glaring lack of entry points as a result of few coherent political forces in the region's countries and declining political will to reform due to continuing economic difficulties and increased tensions in region are also factors supporting Denoeux's argument. Economic reform is "safer," and most countries are willing to engage in it, so many politicians are espousing the idea that the United States should push economic liberalization, with the hope that political liberalization will follow.

According to Denoeux, economic reforms on their own won't lead to political liberalization. Further, unless progress is made on political reform, economic reforms won't last. Reforms that are short on political capital can't sustain the pain of serious economic restructuring. In contrast to the arguments listed above, Denoeux explained why democracy programming continues to be important. Throughout the 1990s in Egypt, erosion of civil liberties was linked to concern over pain from economic reforms. Economic reform led to decreased political freedoms. Tunisia has succeeded at economic growth, but authoritarianism has grown. Ability of Arab countries to continue economic reforms has been hindered by lack of political reforms. Even those who succeed in the private business sector aren't strong enough to take on government and fight for greater political freedoms.

Robert Springborg reviewed the history of democracy programming in Egypt. The first attempts were focused on producing economic liberalization. USAID and its partners tried institutional

capacity building—legislative and judicial strengthening, for example. Practitioners hoped for an opening at the end of the 1991 Gulf War, but this didn't happen. When these early attempts led nowhere, the mission soured on democracy programming and looked to economic growth efforts. Several business associations were started, but they did little to foster democracy.

The mission then focused its efforts at the individual level. The idea was to draw people from the democratic middle who already had organizational and capital resources, and sponsor them quietly. USAID had to be in the background. Through this method, Springborg believes you can build a base in the local community and empower people to work for democratic reform by creating a network of communities to act as lobby for decentralization of local services. Process has been slow, but there aren't many other options. Springborg recommended practitioners to bring in quasi-governmental counterparts but to neither focus too much on a significant political outcome nor trumpet success.

Rhys Payne presented lessons learned and explained what makes democracy programming in the Middle East different than other regions. He stated that many lessons are same as in other sectors and efforts work best when there is an opening. Additionally, due to the growing popularity of nationalist Islam, anti-American sentiment, and the grassroots appeal of Islam, regimes are concerned about sharing power with Islamists. Democracy is, unfortunately, seen as undermining basis of power by the government while Islamists see system as corrupt and seek social justice as rooted in Islam. Economic crises in the Islamic world also stopped reform.

Payne introduced some guiding principles of programming. Practitioners need to try to build on local resources and extract principles of democratic government and let them take shape. They need to identify where democracy helps people and improve access to justice and provide improved local services. Lastly, they need to promote efforts bridging ideological differences.

In the discussion that followed, several points emerged on anti-American sentiment, transitions, and better approaches to programming. Donors taking a background role can help a project weather anti-American sentiment. One group implemented a small grants program through a local civil society umbrella organization and they reached a lot of new partners while the umbrella organization took the lead role.

Practitioners should look for openings in transitions and possibly work with new leaders who want to be popular. These leaders might be willing to be more liberal to gain popularity. Also, regional approaches can be effective, but international ones not so much. The session concluded with participants noting that USAID should be aware of the constraints its partners face.