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FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

AUTHORITARIAN LITERATURE REVIEW

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Authoritarian Literature Review



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INTRODUCTION

For the fourth consecutive year, declines in democracy outpaced gains in 2009, creating the longest continuous period of deterioration in forty years. Backsliding in the former Soviet Union, the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America, and the resilience of authoritarian regimes, such as China and Vietnam, pose pressing challenges for democracy promotion. This literature review examines existing research on transitions to and from authoritarian rule and on authoritarian regimes to generate insights for democracy promotion in authoritarian settings. The review begins with a discussion of regime classifications and trends, and then discusses transition paths, factors affecting democratic regime development and resilience, and factors affecting authoritarian resilience. The review concludes with initial observations and key issues for discussion and further exploration. An annex presents a subset of authoritarian regimes to explore how they stay in power and what threats they face.

I. Regime Classifications

Democracy and authoritarianism represent two ends on a spectrum that ranges from more open to more closed regimes. Where democracy ends and authoritarianism starts is not straightforward, however, as there are an increasing number and variety of hybrid regimes. Several classifications of regime types offer ways to distinguish among them.

Freedom House offers a three-part classification of regimes based on a country's average score for civil liberties and political rights. Scores of 1 to 2.5 correspond to countries that are free, 3 to 5 to countries that are partly free, and 5.5 to 7 to countries that are not free. Table I lists the countries rates as not free in 2009.

The Polity IV Project under the direction of Monty Marshall similarly evaluates regimes on a spectrum that ranges from fully institutionalized autocracies through mixed authority regimes (termed anocracies) to fully institutionalized democracies. Scores of -10 to -6 correspond to autocracies, scores of -5 to +5 to anocracies, and scores of +6 to +10 democracies. The Polity scores evaluate executive recruitment, constraints on executive authority, and political competition.

There is a strong, but inexact, correlation between the Freedom House and Polity scores. The countries identified with an asterisk in Table I are rated as anocracies rather than autocracies by Polity IV, and Polity IV includes Bahrain, Kuwait, and Morocco as fully institutionalized autocracies, whereas Freedom House lists them as partly free. Another difference is that Polity IV codes as anocracies countries that are administered by transitional governments, countries where central authority has collapsed, and countries where foreign authorities maintain local authority, which includes Afghanistan, Cote d'Ivoire, Iraq, and Somalia in this group of countries. Finally, Polity does not include micro-states with populations under 500,000, whereas Freedom House does.

Diamond (2002) offers another classification of democratic and authoritarian regime types ranging from more to less open: liberal democracy, electoral democracy, ambiguous regimes, competitive authoritarian, hegemonic electoral authoritarian, and politically closed authoritarian. He identifies liberal democracies as having an average Freedom House score of 1 to 2, but for the other regime types he uses judgment and not just Freedom House scores, so the country classifications he offers in the 2002 article are more illustrative than definitive.

TABLE I. COUNTRIES RATED AS NOT FREE, FREEDOM HOUSE 2009

5.5	6.0	6.5	7.0
Afghanistan**	Cameroon*	Belarus	Burma
Algeria*	Congo (Kinshasa)*	Chad*	Equatorial Guinea*
Angola*	Guinea	China	Libya
Azerbaijan	Iran	Cuba	North Korea
Brunei*	Iraq**	Eritrea	Somalia**
Cambodia*	Swaziland	Laos	Sudan*
Congo (Brazzaville)*	Tunisia*	Saudi Arabia	Turkmenistan
Cote d'Ivoire**	Vietnam	Syria	Uzbekistan
Egypt*		Zimbabwe*	
Kazakhstan			
Mauritania*			
Oman			
Qatar			
Russia*			
Rwanda*			
Tajikistan*			
United Arab Emirates			

*Denotes countries rated as anocracies by Polity IV.

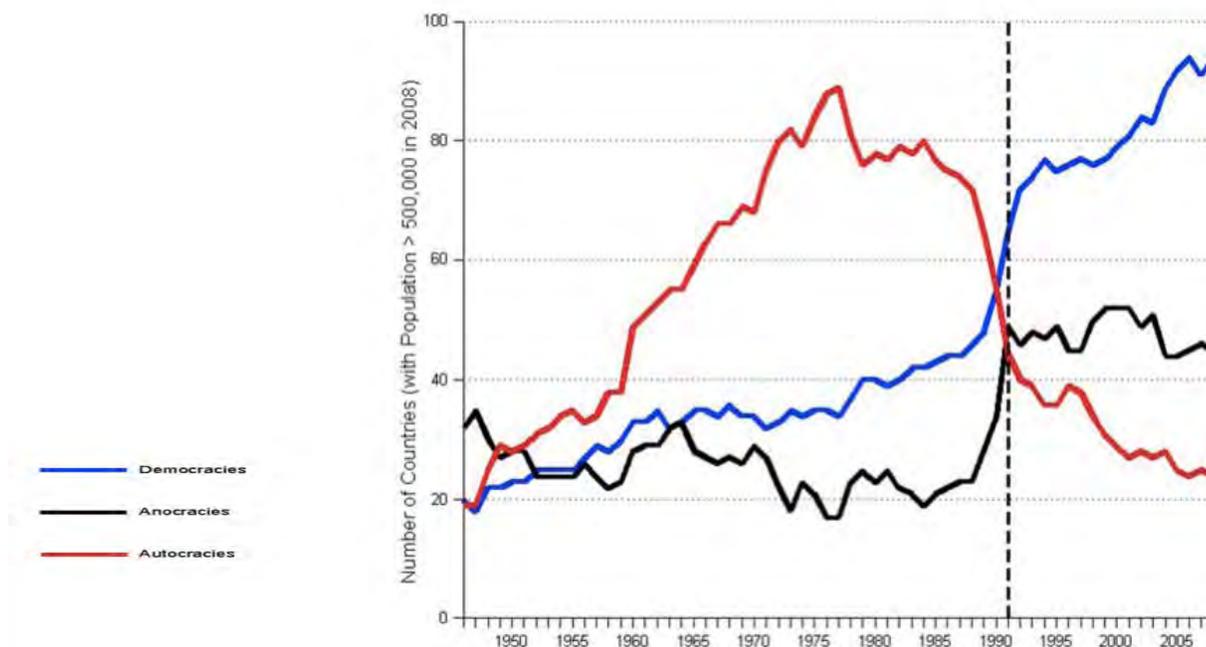
**Denotes countries with incomplete sovereignty, rated as anocracies by Polity IV.

Hadenius and Teorell (2007) offer yet another classification of democratic and authoritarian regime types. They use the mean of each country's Freedom House and Polity scores, converted to a scale from 0 (least democratic) to 10 (most democratic), and identify all regimes with a score below 7.5 as belonging to the authoritarian family. They identify five authoritarian regime types: one party (e.g., North Korea), military (e.g., Burma), monarchy (e.g., Saudi Arabia), no party (e.g., the Maldives), and limited multiparty regime (e.g., Russia). The average democracy scores for these regime types are 1.3, 2.0, 2.1, 2.6, and 4.6, respectively. Thus one-party regimes are the least democratic and limited multiparty regimes are the most democratic of the authoritarian regime types. Limited multiparty regimes are the most common form, representing more than half of all authoritarian regimes. No-party regimes are the least common, with only two or three present at any time during the period 1972-2002. By and large, the limited multiparty regimes in Hadenius and Teorell's classification correspond to the partly free countries in the Freedom House ratings and the anocracies in the Polity scheme.

II. Regime Trends

In the last thirty years, the number of autocracies has plummeted, while the number of democracies and anocracies has increased (see Figure 1). In 2009, Polity data show there were 92 democracies (57%), 46 anocracies (29%), and 23 autocracies (14%). Freedom House data include more countries, and show there were 89 free countries (46%), 58 partly free countries (30%), and 47 not free countries (24%) in 2010.

FIGURE I. GLOBAL TRENDS IN GOVERNANCE, 1946-2008



Source: Monty Marshall and Benjamin Cole, “Global Report 2009: Conflict, Governance, and State Fragility,” Center for Systemic Peace and Center for Global Policy, 2009.

The regime transitions were not unidirectional, however. As Kapstein and Converse (2008) point out, there were 123 democratizations between 1960 and 2004 in 88 different countries. While 67 gave rise to democratic regimes that survived through 2004, 56 ended in a return to authoritarianism. For those cases that ended in reversal, the average length of the democratic episode was just under six years. Anocracies also experienced reversals during this period, and historically have been about three times more likely to experience major reversions to autocracy than democracies (Marshall and Cole 2009).

Transition Paths

Paths of democratization. The literature on transitions suggests distinguishing between four paths of democratization: those led by government, those led by the opposition, those led by joint government and opposition action, and those led by external forces. Huntington (1991) distinguishes between the first three of these democratization processes, but leaves out those led by external forces. Stepan (1988) identifies eight paths from authoritarianism—internal restoration after external reconquest, internal reformulation, externally monitored installation, redemocratization initiated from within the authoritarian regime, society-led termination, party pact, organized violent revolt coordinated by democratic reformist parties, and Marxist-led revolutionary war—which could be reclassified into the four main paths noted above. For example, one could classify organized violent revolt as an extreme subtype of transition led by the opposition. Bunce and Wolchik (2009a) identify elections as a mode of transition in addition to mass mobilization and elite pacts, although one could classify mass mobilization and elections as subtypes of transitions led by the opposition, and could term elite pacts as a transition led by joint government and opposition action.

Divisions within the regime. In their study of transitions in Latin America and Southern Europe, O’Donnell and Schmitter (1986) note that apart from military defeat in an international conflict, “there is no transition whose beginning is not the consequence—direct or indirect—of important divisions within the

authoritarian regime itself, principally along the fluctuating cleavage between hard-liners and soft-liners” (19). While this statement may apply more obviously to the pacted transitions that were the norm in the 1970s and 1980s than to the recent spate of electoral transitions, there are probably still some important ways that splits and defections within the ruling elite allow opposition forces access to electoral resources such as money, media outlets, and patronage, and forestall a crackdown on democratizers. Divisions within the regime can arise because they have achieved their goals, such as economic prosperity or stability; they have not achieved their goals; they have internal fissures over the use of force, the issue of succession, the management of the economy, or some other policy matters; or they face foreign pressures (Przeworski, 1988).

Mass mobilization. O’Donnell and Schmitter (1986) state that democratization involves a crucial component of mobilization and organization of large numbers of individuals. More recently, O’Donnell (2010) stresses that a popular upsurge plays a crucial role in pushing transitions beyond the mere instances of liberalization at which regime soft-liners and the opportunistic opposition typically aim. Bunce, McFaul, and Stoner-Weiss (2010) note the positive impact of significant citizen mobilization on the defeat of dictators and the shift in domestic politics in a decidedly more democratic direction.

International context. As Schmitter (2010) points out, the international context has become an increasingly significant determinant of both the timing and the mode of transition, as well as its outcome. He notes that their earlier work (Schmitter and O’Donnell, 1986) did not anticipate the change in the hegemonic pretensions of the Soviet Union, the rise of the democracy promotion business, or the EU’s assumption of responsibility to assist nearby fledgling democracies materially and through incentives tied to the prospect of membership.

Bunce, McFaul, and Stoner-Weiss (2010) echo these points. They write that regime transitions take place because of the confluence of 3 factors: a domestic struggle between authoritarians and democrats; changes in the behavior of citizens; and short-term changes in the international system.

Economic decline. In their analysis of the 1955-2003 period, Ulfelder and Lustik (2007) find that authoritarian regimes are more likely to make a transition to democracy during periods of economic decline. They find that democracies are not similarly vulnerable to economic crisis, however.

Limited multiparty regimes. Hadenius and Teorell (2007) note that most transitions to democracy occurred from limited multiparty regimes during the 1972 to 2003 period. They write, “This is not surprising, since these regimes hold elections with a degree of openness and contestation and allow some basic political liberties” (153). By contrast, transitions from one-party states and military regimes were more likely to transition to democracy indirectly by first transitioning to limited multiparty regimes than to transition directly to democracy. Moreover, no transitions from monarchies led to democracy; rather, monarchies tended to oscillate between pure monarchism and highly restricted forms of electoral monarchism. Limited multiparty regimes have a shorter life span than other regime types—an average of 5.9 years compared to 17.5 years for democracy, and 11.1, 12.9, 17.8, and 25.4, respectively, for military, no-party, one-party, and monarchy. Limited multiparty regimes can therefore be considered more transitional than other authoritarian regimes.

Elections. Schedler (2010) agrees that electoral authoritarian regimes are vulnerable. He explains that breaking through defensive lines of manipulation is easier, on average, than tearing down authoritarian walls of repression. Representative institutions such as the legislature, the judiciary, elections, the media, civil society, and local government are arenas of control and cooptation for authoritarian rulers, but also

of contention. They can help rulers respond to democratizing pressures and elicit cooperation from societal groups and individuals, but they also contain the possibility of undermining autocratic rule.

Lindberg's (2009) research explores the electoral path from limited multiparty regimes to democracy. He concludes that the repetition of elections, even if flawed, can result in democratization. Those countries which moved early toward elections and persisted with elections have done better at consolidating all aspects of democracy than those countries that delayed holding elections.

Lindberg and contributors to an edited volume (*Democratization by Elections: A New Mode of Transition?*) affirm the following hypothesis on when elections are likely to lead to democracy or autocracy:

- Elections make democratization more likely if they serve to make repression expensive and counterproductive, and spur the opposition to unify and mobilize; and if they make a policy of tolerating the opposition seem to the rulers as if it will make their rule more legitimate, but in fact trigger defections of state actors to the opposition.
- Elections make autocratization more likely if they serve to make repression cheap, easy to target at opposition leaders, or even unnecessary; and if they make it possible for the regime to control toleration of the opposition, to split the opposition, and to use elections as vehicles for patronage; or if elections simply make toleration too costly for the incumbents.

Bunce and Wolchik (2009a) examine the electoral path to democratization in the postcommunist region. They note that elections can bring down authoritarian regimes when there is widespread recognition that the incumbent should not remain in office, including defection of key regime allies, and opposition and citizens engage in an electoral strategy. In examining the eight successful attempts to oust semi-authoritarian rulers through elections between 1996 and 2006, they (2009b) explain that transnational democracy promotion networks developed the electoral model, carried it from place to place, amended it, and carried out electoral challenges to authoritarian rule.

III. Factors Affecting Democratic Development and Resilience

Structural conditions and political leadership. Huntington (1991) notes that no single factor is sufficient or necessary to the development of democracy, and the combination of causes producing democracy varies from country to country and from one time period to another. Political leadership and skill play a crucial role in bringing about democracy, but broader factors facilitate or impede the creation and resilience of democracy. As Linz and Stepan (1978) note, "Structural characteristics of societies—their actual and latent conflicts—constitute a series of opportunities and constraints for the social and political actors, both men and institutions, that can lead to one or another outcome" (4).

Four waves. Huntington (1991) identifies different explanations for each of three waves of democracy. The primary factors responsible for the first wave of democratization appear to be economic and social development, the economic and social environment of the British settler countries, and the victory of the Western Allies in World War I and the resulting breakup of the principal continental empires. The factors largely responsible for the second wave include the victory of the established Western democracies in World War II and decolonization by those democracies after the war. In the third wave, the primary explanations for democratization include: deepening legitimacy problems from military defeats, economic failures, oil shocks, achieving the regime's purpose, and the prevalence of democratic

norms; global economic growth in the 1960s that brought about increased education and an expanding urban middle class; doctrinal changes in Catholic Church; changes in EC, US, and Soviet foreign policies; and a demonstration effect. In the postcommunist fourth wave, McFaul (2010) identifies the disappearance of the Soviet Union and an internal distribution of power favoring challengers to the *ancient regime* as factors explaining the democratic transitions.

Economic development. Many scholars stress the importance of economic conditions in shaping regime dynamics. Lipset (1960) identifies high per capita income and widespread literacy as factors that make democracy more likely to persist. His seminal work suggests that there is a GDP/capita zone of transition or choice, in which traditional forms of rule become increasingly difficult to maintain and where political elites and the prevailing political values can shape choices. Moore (1966) stresses the importance of a middle class (a bourgeoisie) to counter the hegemony of landed elites and push for democracy. More recently, Kapstein and Converse (2008) identify low per capita income, high levels of inequality, and high rates of poverty as factors explaining why democracies fail.

Ulfelder and Lustik (2007) find that a country's low level of development is the largest predictor of backsliding. They hypothesize that "in addition to the changes in social structure, attitudes, and expectations spotlighted by modernization theory, economic development also shapes the resilience of democracy through its relationship to state strength. Poorer states generally have weaker security apparatuses, making them more vulnerable to revolution, and the difficulty they have in paying their soldiers living wages often makes them more vulnerable to military coups. At the same time, incumbent chief executives and ruling parties in poor democracies often face an opposition that is hobbled by a lack of financing and mobilizational capacity, reducing the expected costs of violating democratic procedures in order to remain in power" (370-1).

Factionalism. Politics characterized by factionalism also affect prospects for democracy. Factionalism is characterized by a do-or-die approach to politics in which narrow self-interests trump the public good and rivalries are deep. Examples of factionalism include the polarization of Venezuelans following the election of Hugo Chavez in 1998 and the ongoing confrontation between indigenous activists and wealthier lowlanders in Bolivia. Ulfelder and Lustik (2007) find that such polarizing, winner-take-all competition is the biggest predictor of backsliding from democracy after the country's level of development. Democracies beset by polarization are more than six times as likely to backslide as those that are not.

Executive authority. Recent research also points to the importance of constraints on executive authority for the resilience of democracy. Constraints on executive authority include effective and independent legislatures, judiciaries, media, local governance, and civil associations (Goldstone and Ulfelder, 2004). Kapstein and Converse (2008) find that democracy is reversed 70% of the time where constraints on the executive are weak, and only 40% of the time where constraints are strong.

Ethnic fragmentation. Kapstein and Converse (2008) also find that ethnic fragmentation increases the chance of backsliding. Democratizations in countries with ethnic fragmentation greater than the world average were reversed 51 percent of the time, as compared to 38 percent of the time when ethnic fragmentation was below the average.

Experience with democracy. Research shows that historical experience with democracy helps a country resist backsliding. Kapstein and Converse (2008) show that 47% of first-time democratizations were sustained, whereas 63% of second-time democratizations were sustained for the period 1960 to 2004.

International linkage. A country's relationships to the West also influence its prospects for democracy. As Levitsky and Way (2005) point out, linkage to the West raises the cost of authoritarianism by: heightening the salience in the West of authoritarian government abuse; increasing the probability of an international response; and creating influential domestic constituencies with a stake in democracy through democracy assistance and international ties.

They write, "Although linkage is rooted in a variety of factors, including colonial history, military occupation, geostrategic alliances, and economic development and openness, its primary source is geography. Countries located near the US or the EU are generally characterized by greater economic interaction, a larger number of intergovernmental and interorganizational connections, and higher cross-border flows of people and information than are more geographically distant ones" (23).

IV. Factors Affecting Authoritarian Regime Resilience

The literature also points to a number of factors that make authoritarian regimes more likely to persist. These include economic, political, and social structures.

Resources in state hands. Ulfelder and Lustik (2007) find autocracies that possess energy and mineral resources are less likely to make a transition to democracy. They write, "Compared with an autocracy that earns no income from the depletion of energy and mineral resources, an autocracy that generates even just 10 per cent of its gross national income from these sources is less than half as likely to transition to democracy in a given year" (363). Similarly, Bunce, McFaul and Stoner-Weiss (2010a), Way (2010), and Levitsky and Way (2002) identify state discretionary control over the economy, generated either by state-owned enterprises or by reliance on natural resource revenues, as a pillar of autocrats' strength. Such revenues, Levitsky and Way (2002) note, undermine the development of an autonomous civil society and give authoritarian rulers the means to co-opt opponents and keep supporters in line. The revenues also allow autocracies to pay for a strong coercive apparatus (Diamond, 2010).

Regional explanations of authoritarianism confirm the importance of state resources to regime resilience. Rakner and van de Walle (2009) attribute the resilience of authoritarianism in Africa to the advantages of incumbency and the opposition's limited access to resources outside the state. Similarly, where the state controls the economy and access to rents, Lust (2009) shows how elections in the Middle East and North Africa are primarily about obtaining access to state resources, so people vote for incumbents as the candidates who can deliver services to them. Moreover, Diamond (2010) ascribes the resilience of authoritarianism in the Middle East primarily to natural resource wealth and not to religion. He notes that it is Arab, not Muslim, states that tend to be authoritarian, and of the sixteen Arab countries, eleven are rentier states. These rentier states, he explains, have a strong coercive apparatus, weak, coopted civil society, and little accountability to citizens. Bellin (2004) also identifies the economy in state hands and mineral rents maintaining state coercive capacity as factors explaining authoritarianism in the Arab world, but points to additional factors, including weak civil society, poverty and low literacy rates, high inequality, and tribal traditions of loyalty, nepotism and patriarchy.

Executive authority. Recent research also points to the importance of political structures in bolstering authoritarian regimes. Political institutions that *concentrate executive authority* advantage authoritarian over democratic forces. In their analysis of postcommunist regimes, Bunce, McFaul and Stoner-Weiss (2010a) note that consolidation of authoritarianism is easier where the design of political institutions strengthens

the executive and where *long periods in office* gave leaders increasing control over elections, the media, public spaces, and self-serving constitutional amendments.

Similarly, Haggard and Kaufman (1995) note that the authoritarian regimes best suited for managing crises were those in which authority was concentrated. They write, “Those regimes that fell in the face of crisis were those in which external pressures fragmented the ruling coalition. Collective leaderships or diffuse and decentralized lines of authority were more likely to result in such increased factional conflict and immobilism. Those regimes that survived had developed centralized organizational means for controlling internal dissension, primarily by concentrating both political and military *authority in the hands of a single individual*. Dominant-party authoritarian regimes proved more adept than military regimes at managing conflicts within the government and controlling and coopting broader political challenges.”

Hadenius and Teorell (2007) also find that authoritarian regimes with more *power concentrated in one leader* tend to last longer. They note that in monarchies and one-party dictatorships, more power is concentrated in the hands of a particular leader—what they term personalism—while in military and limited multiparty systems, power is less dependent on a particular person, and tends to shift to new leaders in the same regime.

Along similar lines, Brownlee (2004) shows that authoritarian regimes with *ruling parties* prove more robust than other nondemocratic systems. He explains that a dominant party can resolve intra-elite conflict and prevent the defection of influential leaders, whereas the decline of ruling party institutions generates elite polarization and public rifts, a necessary but insufficient condition for successful opposition mobilization and regime change. Way (2010) also notes that authoritarian regimes are more likely to endure when they have a single highly institutionalized ruling party backed by a nonmaterial source of cohesion such as a revolutionary tradition or highly salient ideology.

State coercive apparatus. As referenced above in the discussion of resources in state hands, the literature also suggests that an extensive, cohesive, well-funded and experienced coercive apparatus is a source of regime stability. Way (2010) notes that autocrats are more likely to hang onto power when they command such a coercive apparatus that can reliably harass regime opposition and put down protest.

Weak civil society. A recent examination of democracy and authoritarianism in the postcommunist world also shows evidence that weak civil societies can serve as a strong impediment to democratic change (Bunce, McFaul, and Stoner-Weiss, 2010b).

Performance legitimacy. Performance legitimacy can provide a pillar of authoritarian regime resilience. Authoritarian regimes like Singapore, China, and Vietnam rely on the strong performance of their economy to legitimate their rule. As noted above, authoritarian regimes are more likely to make a transition to democracy during periods of economic decline (Ulfelder and Lustik, 2007). Authoritarian regimes can also benefit from their performance in providing social services, as in Venezuela, fighting in internal or external conflicts, as in Russia, or in withstanding international pressure, as in Iran.

Historical legacy. Authoritarian regimes can also sustain their rule through claims to legitimacy from their historical role in the liberation or unification of the country. Authoritarian regimes in Zimbabwe, Mozambique, and Namibia are such examples. Historical legacies also include traditional subordination to authority and a focus on collective interests, as is the case after decades of Communist Party rule in Vietnam.

International support. A country's relationships to other countries also influence the resilience of authoritarianism. Foreign investment, development assistance, military training and equipment, and concessionary oil from friendly authoritarian regimes like China, Venezuela, and countries in the Arab League can help shore up authoritarian regimes. By the same token, geostrategic interests such as oil or the war on terror can prompt democratic regimes to support authoritarian regimes, as exemplified by the US government support to Egypt and Kazakhstan.

Threats and fear. Threats to peace, national unity, or ways of life can provide a basis for preserving the status quo. The fear of conflict in the wake of war or threats to national unity in the context of ongoing insurgencies can undergird authoritarian regimes, as in Burma. Similarly, the threat of terrorism can serve as a rationale for maintaining authoritarian rule, as in Algeria. Domestic middle class and international donor fear of radical Islam as the alternative should a current regime collapse can also weaken pressure for democracy, as in much of the Middle East (Diamond, 2010).

Institutionalization. Although not applied to other countries in the literature, Nathan (2003) argues that institutionalization explains the resilience of the Chinese regime. He focuses on four aspects of the Chinese Communist Party regime's institutionalization: the increasingly rule-bound nature of its succession politics; the increase in meritocratic as opposed to factional considerations in the promotion of political elites; the differentiation and functional specialization of institutions within the regime; and the establishment of institutions for political participation and appeal that strengthen the party's legitimacy among the public at large. As noted in the case study of China below, other factors such as rapid economic growth have also buttressed the resilience of the authoritarian regime.

VI. Summary

This literature review points to a number of variables that can contribute to democratic transitions. These include:

- Divisions within the regime
- Mass mobilization
- Favorable international context
- Economic decline
- Succession crisis
- Elections even under limited competition

The literature review also points to a number of variables that can contribute to democracy, such as:

- High levels of economic development
- High levels of literacy and education
- A middle class
- Availability of resources outside the state
- Low levels of political polarization and extremism
- Constraints on the executive
- Low levels of ethnic fragmentation
- Active civil society
- Historical experience with democracy
- International linkage

The foregoing review also points to factors that can advantage authoritarianism, such as:

- High concentration of national wealth in state hands
- Few constraints on the executive
- Concentration of power in individual leader or ruling party
- Strong coercive apparatus
- Weak civil society
- Performance legitimacy
- Historical legacy
- International support
- Threats and fear
- Regime institutionalization

V. Initial Observations

A few observations stand out from this review of the literature. While discussion at the workshop will develop these further, this paper lays out some initial ideas for consideration.

Overall, it seems clear that most transitions to democracy occur from limited multiparty regimes and through elections. This accords a clear role to democracy assistance in improving the playing field for challengers in limited multiparty regimes, and in moving closed authoritarian regimes to limited multiparty regimes if not to democracy.

The control of economic resources plays a large role in authoritarian resilience. State access to natural resource wealth and control of the economy enable authoritarian regimes to pay off supporters and co-opt or repress opponents. Economic decline may pose a threat to the regime, but less so if there are no or few groups outside the state with alternative sources of wealth and power.

Strong economic performance provides legitimacy for authoritarian regimes such as Russia, China, and Vietnam, but is not necessary for authoritarian regime survival. Poor performing, repressive regimes, such as those in Zimbabwe and Burma, have persisted for decades, though they may need to rely on more force than high performing regimes.

VI. Key Issues for Discussion and Further Exploration

This literature review has made an initial contribution to understanding the dynamics of regime transitions and authoritarian resilience. It points, however, to several key issues for further discussion and exploration. These include:

1. Is it possible to discern trends regarding liberalization and/or possible openings in authoritarian regimes? How can USAID do this?
2. If liberalization or an opening seems possible, how does USAID/DG best position itself?
3. If liberalization or an opening seems unlikely, what should USAID/DG do? What is the rationale/purpose of DG programming under these circumstances?

4. In what circumstances does it make sense to support "reformers" in authoritarian regimes? How can this best be done? What has been the impact of doing so?
5. In what circumstances and in what ways should USAID consider supporting controlled (less than fully competitive) elections?
6. How does the advent of new media affect authoritarianism and our thinking about political transitions? Does it create significant new opportunities for USAID/DG?
7. In what circumstances and for what purposes does it make sense for USAID to support the "good governance" agenda of an authoritarian regime (such as rule of law, anti-corruption and decentralization)?

ANNEX II. REVIEW OF AUTHORITARIAN REGIMES

For this literature review, MSI examined 11 authoritarian regimes to understand how they stay in power and what threats they face. The list includes: Algeria, Angola, Burma, Cambodia, China, Egypt, Iran, Kazakhstan, Russia, Vietnam, and Zimbabwe. What follows are the brief descriptions of regime resilience and weakness in each country.

ALGERIA

Political and Economic Systems

In Algeria, the military, president, ruling party⁷ and state apparatus share power but continually compete. The legislative and judicial branches of government are subordinate to the executive, while key issues of security and other policy have been decided by a secretive group of senior army and intelligence officers.

The president is elected by universal adult suffrage for five-year terms. President Bouteflika was first elected in 1999, after his opponents withdrew to protest alleged fraud; he was reelected in 2004 with over 85% of the vote, despite facing what was considered to be strong competition. Constitutional amendments passed in 2008 allowed him to run for a third term in 2009, which he did successfully (and effectively unopposed). The amendments also increased the president's powers relative to the prime minister (whom he appoints) and other entities. Although Bouteflika owed much of his early success to military support, he has grown increasingly autonomous in recent years.

While Algeria is not an electoral democracy, parliamentary elections are more democratic than those in many other Arab states. Constitutional amendments made in the late 1980s paved the way for a multi-party regime, replacing the single-party system dominated by the National Liberation Front (FLN) since independence in 1962. Several aspects of the constitution and electoral law, however, limit competition and representation, along with the ability of parties to challenge the regime: political parties based solely on religious or regional bases are prohibited, and the major opposition party, the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), has been banned under this law; parties must be approved by the Interior Ministry; and the electoral system is closed list PR, privileging central party leadership.

The judiciary is not independent of the executive. The security forces cite the threat of terrorism as justification for human rights infractions, as well as limits on assembly. Terror groups linked to al-Qaeda continue to attack government and foreign targets. Journalists face an array of government tools designed to control the press, and the government has significantly improved its internet monitoring power, beginning to block websites. Private newspapers are published, however, and journalists have been aggressive in their coverage of government affairs in recent years. Permits are required to establish nongovernmental organizations, and those with Islamist leanings are regarded with suspicion by the government. Workers can establish independent trade unions.

Sources of Regime Resilience

⁷ It is more accurate to say ruling parties, since the dominant party since the war of independence, the FLN, has ceded power to the military and, much more briefly, the military-backed FLN-breakaway RND.

The current administration has survived since 1999 due to:

- Widespread fear of extreme political violence: President Bouteflika, working with the military, is widely credited with restoring political stability to Algeria, although attacks by Islamist militants increased again in the 2006-09 period. The president has also helped Algeria overcome years of international isolation for Algeria.
- Managed competition: The FLN has returned to power, in competition with FLN breakaway factions, and co-opted Islamist groups.
- Cooptation funded by natural resources: Oil and natural gas revenues enable transfers to disgruntled groups. For example, in an attempt to diffuse Berber unrest, in the past few years the government has increased economic aid to the region and made Tamazight a national, although not an official, language.
- US foreign policy: Since 9/11 and given the presence in Algeria of AQIM, the United States has considered Algeria an important partner in the fight against terrorism, and this legitimacy has also allowed the government to avoid profound political liberalization.

Threats to the Regime

- Illegal Islamist opposition/ insurgencies: The regime's policy of excluding the radical Islamist opposition from politics, and otherwise repressing it, has failed to eliminate its attractions for many Algerians.
- Youth discontent and the economy: Population growth and associated problems—unemployment and underemployment, the inability of social services to keep pace with rapid urban migration, corruption, inadequate industrial productivity, and a decaying infrastructure—continue to plague Algeria.
- Uncertainty around presidential succession and elite infighting: the president is reportedly in poor health and may not live out his term, while members of the military and bureaucracy appear to be engaged in infighting under the guise of corruption investigations.

Evolutionary Path (5-10 years)

Despite the uncertainty surrounding presidential succession, the regime overall is likely to maintain the current level of authoritarianism in order to control the Islamist opposition. Natural resources will enable it to assuage its under-occupied young male population, at least in the short term.

ANGOLA

Political and Economic System

Although Angola theoretically operates under a multi-party system, the 2008 elections resulted in a landslide victory for the ruling party, the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA). MPLA received 81 percent of popular vote, followed by the National Union for the Total Independence (UNITA) which was only able to secure 10.5 percent. These elections solidified the reality of a one-party system while working at the same time to legitimize the government's authority.

There is a strong dissonance between the democratic reality and the theoretical systems of checks and balances within the Angolan constitution. The president serves as chief advisor on government issues, leader of the MPLA, commander in chief of military forces, and has the privilege to nominate and dismiss

the prime minister, the cabinet, and provincial governors at any time. Power sharing between the prime minister and the president is largely emblematic as the president has control over the most lucrative and powerful departments (including the department of finance and the state-owned oil and diamond companies). The General Assembly is elected by the public, however resource control, and the control of state-owned media, have also turned the Assembly into a one-party system with 191 out of the 200 elected seats from the MPLA party. Although the constitution calls for judicial independence, the Justice Department is completely under the control of the Ministry of Justice, and Supreme Court decisions are often made in order to provide legitimacy to the MPLA. Court systems are fragmented and have little influence due to lack of resources, political interference and the overall unfamiliarity of the general population with their rights, and what to do if these rights are violated.

Sources of Regime Resilience

The president and MPLA party are able to sustain their power with a large patronage system, a firm control of civil society, control over media outlets, and a society exhausted from civil war. These systems of control are supported by the massive wealth that Angola derives from oil and diamonds. Patronage systems extend to militias used for political intimidation as well as to parties of opposition to maintain the current hegemonic order. Civil society is controlled by recent defamation laws (in direct violation of the constitution) which prevent any direct opposition to the government. Laws have also been passed in order to assure that all NGOs are partially dependent on the state and federal funds. Finally, all sources of media are owned by the state except for a few small radio stations that are not allowed to broadcast outside of the major cities. In addition and probably in correlation to this control over media, the opposition party, UNITA, was seen as a guerilla force within the civil war, and has a hard time distancing itself from its past. Slogans within the 1990s read, "MPLA Steals but UNITA Kills" representing the choice of the public of a lesser evil.

Threats to the Regime

There are few threats to President Dos Santos regime. Angola's rich natural resources allow the government to operate with little outside influence. Due to Angola's diverse resources, countries such as China, India, and Brazil have agreements with the government to help improve infrastructure with little to no strings attached, and therefore there is no pressure for transparency or focus on human rights. There is inadequate civil society presence and limited social rights and education; despite the massive divide between the rich and poor, the masses have no ability to mobilize. Currently, the National Committee is working with the president on a revision of the constitution which will not be completed for at least two years, and thus will delay local elections for the timing being. Though they are fraught with corruption, there is a possibility of change through local elections.

Evolutionary Path (5- 10 years)

Without illness or perhaps death (dos Santos is 67 years old) it does not look like the MPLA President will step down, or another candidate would be supported. There is however, a rapidly growing youth population, who are not currently being engaged within the government. The coupling of exclusion from leadership positions within the government and the rise of youth unemployment may offer a window of change (if an avenue for mobilization is found). Mid- to longer-term threats to the regime could include the worldwide economic recession and a drop price of oil. Since the patronage system is, at best, an instable and fragile system of support, an absence of or sharp decrease in oil revenues could lead to regime upheaval and/or an increase the need for outside aid coupled with international influence.

BURMA

Political and Economic System

Burma is a closed military dictatorship that is transitioning to electoral authoritarianism. The current junta, formed in 1988, is introducing a new constitution and planning elections for later this year. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, who has been under house arrest for most of past two decades, announced that her party would boycott the elections due to the unjust election process. This move led to the automatic dissolution of the party, in accordance with the election law. Western governments had said that her participation and that of her party were prerequisites for legitimate elections. Although the new constitution and election process are designed to maintain the military's control—for example, the constitution reserves 25 percent of seats for the military in the new Parliament—elections could decentralize some of the military's power.

The military government is also moving away from years of Soviet-style economic management that has left the majority of the country's 55 million people in dire poverty. It has begun the largest sell-off of state assets in the country's history, including government buildings, port facilities, factories, and a large stake in the national airline. Businessmen allied with the military are buying many of the assets, the proceeds of which may allow military elites to build up cash for election campaigns or ensure that civil servants and soldiers are paid.

Sources of Regime Resilience

- Burma is endowed with rich natural resources, including gold, gemstones, copper, nickel, oil, gas, and timber, which provide a source of revenue for the military junta despite the country's widespread poverty. The military also secures revenue from trafficking in heroin.
- There are few alternative sources of wealth outside the military and its cronies.
- The regime has a strong coercive apparatus, as evidenced by brutal suppression of the 2007 popular demonstrations, and the successful offensive against Karen militants in 2009.
- Due to the extreme repressiveness of the regime and the regime's establishment of government organized non-governmental organizations (GONGOs), independent civil society is weak in Burma.
- Ethnic insurgencies and the threat of secession bolster support for strong-armed rule.

Threats to the Regime

- Weakened legitimacy poses a threat to the regime. The attack on Buddhist monks and other unarmed protestors in 2007, the regime's resistance to aid in the wake of Cyclone Nargis in 2008, and extreme mismanagement of the economy have elicited worldwide condemnation and pushed some in the military to question the regime's legitimacy to rule. This is especially the case among younger officers, who are concerned about their own futures.
- Power may be less concentrated after the 2010 elections.
- Ethnic insurgencies continue to pose a threat to the regime, including Karen militants and the Kachin and Wa ethnic groups.

Evolutionary Path (5-10 years)

The regime is initiating a gradual opening, which it will likely be able to control in the next few years. The development of alternative sources of power in a new business elite may pose longer-term threats to the authoritarian regime.

CAMBODIA

Political Economic System

The political system of Cambodia is a one-party dominant system based on patronage, cooptation and intimidation. The current ruling party in Cambodia, the Cambodia People's Party (CPP), is led by Prime Minister Hun Sen, who is now the world's longest serving chief executive. Although election procedures are somewhat competitive, electoral competition is limited by the ruling party's superior organization and control over state resources and the economy. With little independent power, the parliament, judiciary and local government of Cambodia provide limited checks and balances to the prime minister and ruling party. There are independent civil society and media organizations, but they tend to be small and their influence is limited by the hostile political environment.

Cambodia is one of the poorest countries in Asia and its economy is based largely agriculture. However, there has been relatively strong economic growth in recent years driven largely by foreign investment in property, tourism, and light manufactures. Overall the economy is open and market-driven; however, in practice the domestic private sector is closely tied to the political elite.

Sources of Regime Resilience

After the horrors of the Khmer Rouge era, there followed a dysfunctional era that occurred when the CPP shared power with the FUNCINPEC - a royalist political party in Cambodia that merged with CPP prior to the 2008 election. These experiences have left Cambodian society with a general desire for peace and stability.

Hun Sen continues to provide long-running and effective leadership. The CPP has established its presence and influence throughout Cambodia and has effective control over the military and police. Currently, there is weak opposition to the CPP and strong support for the party from neighboring China.

Threats to the Regime

While there are no major immediate threats to the regime, the long-term future is uncertain. Because the political state relies heavily on the leadership of Hun Sen, his death or incapacitation would damage the regime and leave it vulnerable. Furthermore, dissonance within the party itself or a potential economic crisis could split or rupture the CPP. In addition, excessive corruption and or human rights abuses could challenge the legitimacy of the state. The ability of the current regime to rule the younger generation is also in question.

Evolutionary Path (5-10 Years)

Although much depends on the health of Hun Sen and his continued ability to marginalize any significant opposition, continued economic growth also plays a contributing fact to the regime's evolutionary path over the next five to ten years.

CHINA

Political and Economic Systems

China is a one-party state whose politics are dominated by the Communist Party of China (CPC), the world's largest political organization. The party has overseen China's rapid socio-economic development while at the same time seeking to preserve political "stability" and social "harmony." The continued success of the Chinese economy has led to China's recognition as a global power and consequently a surge in national pride and self-confidence.

Although China is a highly centralized unitary state, its size and diversity require significant de facto regional discretion and variation in governance. There exists a nascent, inconsistent and slowly evolving "rule of law," but this is limited largely to apolitical areas. Although nascent and highly imperfect, some semblance of checks and balances between society and the political system manifests itself within the relationships between the CPC, the state, the burgeoning private sector and overall society. The government is open to "citizen participation" but is wary of the collective action represented by organized civil society. There is a vibrant media, but it operates only within permissible political boundaries and is vulnerable to being harassed or shut down at any time.

China has a mixed economy. The Party/government determines the economic policy environment at the macro and sectoral levels. The economy has both a dynamic private sector and many large and profitable state-owned enterprises. Sound economic policies, bountiful and inexpensive labor, openness to foreign investment and export orientation have combined to produce rapid economic growth and dramatic social development over the last two decades.

Sources of Regime Resilience

The CPC-dominated regime has proven itself remarkably adaptive and durable. Its overall stability in the face of past challenges led to the country's rapid economic growth and national development resulting in a strong amount of national pride. Although the CPC remains repressive in many ways, it also fears that social dissatisfaction could lead to organized political opposition, so the party and state are fairly responsive to major social problems and dislocations. Because of this, no major threats to the regime are evident in the immediate future.

Threats to the Regime

However, potential areas of insecurity for the future exist. The increased complexity and sophistication of the Chinese society could prove challenging for the CPC, particularly in the case of mismanagement of a serious social issue such as the increasing social stratification and growing disparity in income and wealth. Also, the process by which the regime addresses a major economic reversal or the mishandling of a major and widespread social catastrophe, such as a health or environmental calamity, could challenge the legitimacy of the CPC. A serious split in party leadership could also threaten the regime.

Evolutionary Path (5-10 Years)

Over the next five to ten years, China's trajectory will depend on a number of factors: the pace of economic growth; the social consequences of that growth; and the continued ability of the party and or the state to manage social change. Most likely this evolutionary path will include the continued ebb and flow of space for independent social activism and media. Finally, as an adjunct to the party and or state, stronger 'civil society' and 'rule of law' will most likely be developed.

EGYPT

Political and Economic Systems

The president of Egypt is elected, but under rules that have almost guaranteed the election of the incumbent. The security forces are next or equal in power to the chief executive, representing the largest single category of government employment. A state of emergency has been in place since the assassination of Sadat in 1981. It gives the executive almost unlimited powers of search and arrest, limits public gatherings, and allows military courts to try civilian cases. The Ministry of Justice also heavily controls major aspects of the judiciary. The rule of law and legal institutions are thus subordinate to State of Emergency regulations and the executive.

Competition is extremely restricted, via the constitution, laws on parties, association, assembly and speech, the manipulation of elections, and informal practice and power structures. Egypt has a multi-party system but the largest opposition force, the Muslim Brotherhood, is banned, and the legal opposition is marginalized. The ruling party, the National Democratic Party, dominates the People's Assembly, and helps control local government, mass media, organized labor, and the huge public sector. The absence of competition extends to civil society. Since Nasser, the state has either brought under its control or created organizations intended to occupy politically sensitive, socio-economic space or to mobilize supporters under the leadership of the state, such as unions and syndicates. Freedom of the press is restricted in law and practice.

Egypt is highly centralized. Local government is largely under the control of appointed governors, most of whom have security backgrounds, while the NDP controls over 90 % of the seats and ran unopposed in most in 2008.

Sources of Regime Resilience

- **Patronage:** Public patronage is based on Egypt's huge public sector, including major sectors of the economy, which hires 2/3 of all university graduates and provides a range of subsidies. Patronage flows through personalistic networks from the president down.
- **Repression:** The state apparatus is focused on control, including extensive use of surveillance and the use of informers; controls are enshrined in the constitution and a host of restrictive laws and regulations.
- **Divide and conquer tactics:** Executive interventions have weakened political opposition in part by fomenting rivalries.

- Fear of the alternative: The regime is able to refer to a plausible threat of Islamic fundamentalism; and the middle class fears unrest, as well as success by the Muslim Brotherhood.
- Foreign friends:
 - U.S. foreign policy is not aimed at punishing Egypt for continued authoritarianism, given its vital need for Egyptian cooperation on military and geo-strategic issues in the region. Broadening competition might be antithetical to US interests at least in the short term, since the MB would benefit.
 - The regime is also benefiting from investment from Gulf countries, and growing economic ties with China and Russia.

Threats to the Regime

- The increasing age and frail health of the President.
- The decay of public institutions and decline in the state's ability to deliver social entitlements, due to its preoccupation with security and corruption.
- External economic shocks and internal economic mismanagement. A decline in world commodity prices is hurting Egypt's subsidy system, job growth and wages. Economic reforms have exacerbated inequality. Political order had been predicated on the government's maintenance of a social safety net (free health care is a constitutional right for example).
- Limited outlets for public dissatisfaction with governmental policies.
- Division within the regime about how to deal with economic problems and unrest (and succession).
- The rise of new forces for change, using new technologies, although they are not yet well organized.

Evolutionary Path (5-10 years)

The political backsliding that began in the wake of the November/December 2005 parliamentary elections will not easily be reversed, due to the institutionalization of new constraints on political competition and participation; a protracted and uncertain presidential succession; increasing concern within the regime with growing social unrest; the emergence of new, harder-to-contain forms of dissent; adverse economic trends; and the appeal of political Islam to significant segments of the population. The most likely scenario: Gamal Mubarak succeeds his father and maintains the structural status quo; significant political liberalization is unlikely. Less likely but possible: one or a small group of top-level military/security generals take control, possibly with a president who is a figurehead; liberalization is also unlikely under this scenario.

IRAN

Political and Economic Systems

Overseeing the country's political structure—*above* the three branches of government—is the supreme leader (first, Ayatollah Ruhollah Musavi Khomeini, now Ayatollah Ali Khamenei), who is indirectly elected. He appoints and as a result maintains influence over all or portions of all key state institutions, and he exercises ultimate veto power. Through the Office of the Supreme Leader, Ali Khamenei maintains

control of and access to both the informal and formal networks existing within the Islamic Republic. The president is elected and is in principle second in authority to the supreme leader.

The Guardian Council is central to the degree of competition present in formal politics. Half its members are clerics appointed by the supreme leader. The council is constitutionally mandated to review parliamentary legislation for adherence to Islamic principles, and has appropriated the role of vetting election candidates, including for the presidency. The council has been able to eliminate reformers from political arenas and veto reform-oriented legal change.

Domestic security forces include the Law Enforcement Forces (LEF), the Ministry of Intelligence and Security (MOIS), the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC or Pasdaran) and the Basij Resistance Forces (the Basij). Their roles overlap and all devote considerable effort to monitoring domestic political and social behavior as well as what US observers would consider crime. With its large budget and extensive organization, the Ministry of Intelligence and Security is one of the most powerful ministries in the Iranian government, operating under the guidance of the supreme leader.

The constitution and legal codes provide for a variety of rights, but modify these rights with generally worded exceptions concerning adherence to Islamic principles and national security. These loopholes, along with security-related amendments to the codes, are deployed by government authorities in arbitrary and subjective ways, so as to favor the state and suppress what the regime perceives as criticism. The judiciary, along with the Guardian Council, is one of the major instruments of conservative control over society.

Parliament is directly elected, continues to serve as an arena of debate, and is not necessarily a rubber stamp for executive decisions. But it is now dominated by conservatives. In addition to national level elections, Iran since 1999 has held elections for urban and rural municipal councils. These contests have been meaningful, but the Guardian Council has taken over the vetting of candidates at the local level from Parliament. In addition, legislation since 1999 has weakened local council powers, leaving most localities highly dependent on financial transfers from the center. More powerful are the provincial governors, who are appointed by the Ministry of Interior, and perhaps also the imams jomeh or Friday prayer leaders, who are appointed by the supreme leader and are effectively his representatives at local levels.

Media and civil society face harsh suppression if they are perceived to oppose the regime, despite constitutional protections. While Iranians are proficient in the use of communications technology and continually develop ways to avoid government restrictions, the environment in Iran for the competition of ideas has deteriorated since 2005. The state owns all legal broadcast media and bans satellite dishes; it also tries to block overseas Persian-language channels. News reporting is tightly controlled. The government systematically blocks websites inside and outside Iran that carry political news and analysis or are deemed "immoral." NGOs are allowed to form under the constitution, and current estimates range from five to eight thousand. All NGOs must register with and report on their activities and finances to the government or face severe penalties. They are effectively barred from engaging in political activity.

Restrictions on the rights of assembly, association and speech were tightened after the victory of hard-liners in the 2004 parliamentary elections. The Ahmadinejad administration, after its inauguration in 2005, showed even less tolerance for dissent. Since Ahmadinejad's reelection last year, and the protests that accompanied it, the regime has cracked down even more extremely, closing papers and website; beating, arresting and even executing critics; and further suppressing student and workers' organizations.

Sources of Regime Resilience

- Repression is thorough and increasingly extreme.
- Formal and informal reshaping of the institutional setting by conservatives in the regime to ensure conservative institutions/ organizations/ laws are more powerful than democratic elements.
- Divisions within the opposition.
- Nationalism that includes pride in Iran's nuclear program and ability to resist outside control.
- Patronage and cooptation of broad segments of the population, through subsidies and state employment (government employs up to 45% of the labor force); and key segments like the Revolutionary Guard.
- Apathy, particularly among youth.

Threats to the Regime

- Opposition forces: have not been completely wiped out, represent a major stream of political belief in Iran, and are now in alliance with some pragmatic factions.
- Highly factionalized politics, such that even the conservative alliance currently ruling Iran may split, e.g. over the economy, and or the degree of repression.
- Economy and government resources: Challenges include a rapidly growing, young population with limited job prospects and high levels of unemployment; heavy dependence on oil revenues and vulnerability to oil price declines; substantial external debt; poverty and growing inequality; and double digit inflation. At the same time, Iran is burdened by expensive state subsidies on many basic goods; a large, inefficient public sector (estimated at as much as 45% of total employment); and state monopolies over large parts of the economy. The government may have boxed itself in: in the absence of social safety nets for those in the private sector, and significant job creation, trimming public sector employment and lessening transfers can only increase social unrest.
- Khamenei and conservative, politically active religious leaders have lost legitimacy in some sectors.

Evolutionary Path (5-10 years)

Prospects for internal reform remain limited. Despite domestic opposition, factional disputes and a mounting economic crisis, the regime continues to remain in firm control for the foreseeable future. If the economic situation worsens sharply (perhaps in part due to new sanctions), and prompts regime change, there are three possible outcomes. (1) the Green Movement and its pragmatist allies are sufficiently strong to replace the current government and initiates reforms; (2) a military figure takes over à la Reza Khan in the 1920s, or Mobarak in Egypt, and establishes a military dictatorship with religious overtones; or (3) the Revolutionary Guard could install another highly conservative cleric as supreme leader and continues on more or less the current path.

KAZAKHSTAN

Political and Economic Systems

Nursultan Nazarbayev, the chairman of the National Democratic Party (Nur Otan) has been the only president since independence in 1991. The National Democratic Party holds 98% of seats in Parliament. The National Democratic Party maintains strong control of politics and the economy. The government regulates almost all media.

The country has experienced rapid economic development from foreign investment in the oil industry. Fuel and metals exports account for over 60 percent of Kazakhstan's total export earnings. There is little investment in the agricultural development, despite the fact that the country used to be the largest wheat supplier in the region.

Sources of Regime Resilience

- Single president and party rule
- Strong dominance over socio-economic and political situation
- Strong political and economic relationships with developed countries as well as Russia

Threats to the Regime

Short term: No major threats

Longer term:

- Lack of government support to other industries besides extraction of natural resources, predominantly oil, gas, and coal
- Corruption and absence of political competition
- Economic monopoly
- Violation of media freedom

Evolutionary Path (5-10 years)

Projections for the 2012 election suggest that the next president will be appointed like the past two presidents of Russia (Putin and Medvedev), the government will maintain control of politics and the economy, and corruption will continue unabated. However, reduced oil wealth and the high cost of living may lead to an economic crisis.

RUSSIA

Political and Economic Systems

Russia's constitution provides for a strong president, a bicameral parliament, and a constitutional court. In practice, Prime Minister Vladimir Putin has extensive personalized power, with President Dmitry Medvedev serving as a loyal, dependent supporter. Regular elections take place, but are rigged in favor of the authorities. The ruling United Russia party has supermajorities in the national parliament and effectively controls almost all regional legislatures. Opposition parties exist, but are irrelevant.

In practice, the parliament and courts do not check Putin's power, but it is limited by extensive corruption, an expansive bureaucracy, the large size of the country, and a violent insurgency in the North Caucasus that remains active despite (and in reaction to) the regime's use of repressive force. Rule of law is limited by the executive branch's use of the courts for political purposes. There is little regard for property rights. Russia has a federal structure although the president appoints all 83 governors. Taxing and budgetary powers are mostly centralized in Moscow.

The economy is dependent on natural resource exports, rising and falling with the price of oil. While the service sector is growing, conditions are not conducive for small business. There is a mixed picture for foreign investors. Only the energy and arm industries are globally competitive.

The global economic crisis has frayed overall popular satisfaction with the regime, though regime stability is likely during the next 5-10 years due to repression of the opposition, limited media freedom, and a politically apathetic population. The government regularly announces prominent efforts to diversify/modernize the economy and fight corruption to little practical effect, though some firms are importing technology from the West.

Sources of Regime Resilience

Putin's popularity derives mainly from improving individual living standards. The key is management of natural resource income to smooth oil price fluctuations, energy subsidies to households and factories, cooptation of potential opposition groups, controlled television, sophisticated manipulation of the Internet, and selective repression of investigative journalists and public protests.

Threats to the Regime

Short-term: An incompetent response to a natural disaster or large-scale industrial accident, the exposure of direct links between officials and political assassinations, increasing public anger over police and other official corruption, or a spike in organized crime activity are potential short-term threats to the regime.

Medium-term: the need to increase state spending to reduce social tensions, a potential drop in the oil price and declining demand for Russian natural gas exports, the 2012 presidential elections (requiring Putin and Medvedev to clarify their relations more), embarrassment related to 2014 Sochi Olympics, or the spread of North Caucasus violence represent medium-term threats.

Evolutionary Path (5-10 years)

Russia's most likely future is political stagnation under a "Putinist" regime characterized by a managed (but largely inert) civil society, modest economic growth, and continued reliance on natural resource exports. Potential alternatives include a split within the elite leading to a more democratic system (perhaps within the framework of a single party) or a global economic crisis cutting energy income and leading the government to rely on increased repression.

VIETNAM

Political and Economic Systems

Vietnam's political system is dominated by a single party, the Vietnamese Communist Party (VCP). No other political parties are allowed to operate. The election of party leadership is a top-down process with some consultation with lower levels. Internally the party is governed primarily by the Leninist principle of "democratic centralism" according to which internal debates are allowed, but once decisions have been made, all party members are expected to comply. The party has an extensive grassroots reach, with members and organizational structures extending into most villages and urban neighborhoods, and it organizes cells in all state organizations. Parallel to the party at all administrative levels are state agencies and mass organizations (MOs). In theory, the party controls only personnel and broad policy directions,

but in practice the party intervenes. The overlap of the party with the state and with non-state institutions means that there is no formal system of checks and balances.

Vietnam has popularly elected organs, such as the National Assembly and People's Councils (at local levels). Candidates in these elections are pre-screened, however, so that only persons acceptable to the party are allowed to appear on the ballot. Recently the National Assembly has been allowed to serve as an arena for debate, but these organs play secondary roles in the system to the party and state bureaucracy.

The legal system is a mixture of common law, civil law and Leninist theory. Both the content and administration of Vietnam's body of law are undergoing rapid change to meet international trade and investment standards. The party's accountability under the new approach, however, is ambiguous. The courts are not independent.

Vietnam is somewhat decentralized, and in practice local governments often ignore central policy with impunity, or comply only when subsidies and other incentives are given.

In recent years, civil society organizations have increased in number, but the government keeps close tabs on associations. Media are tightly controlled.

Vietnam's economic reforms have been impressive, but political liberalization has not really moved since 1986. While economic growth and structural change have prompted, and eased, a number of governance and legal reforms, these reforms are intended to sustain growth and thus the regime. The manner in which established institutions like the media, the National Assembly, local People's Committees/Councils, and mass organizations are becoming increasingly active is watched and manipulated to ensure that VCP primacy is not put in jeopardy. In the case of the private sector, the VCP seems to have decided "not to fight them but to join them."

Sources of Regime Resilience

Performance legitimacy is the single most important source of regime resilience in Vietnam. The VCP reshaped a dysfunctional command economy, continues to deliver better standards of living to the majority of the population, and has improved Vietnam's standing in the world.

Other sources are:

- **Historic legacy:** The party's role in expelling imperialist powers and national reunification has been important, although it is being weakened by the youth of the population.
- **Controlled competition and mobilization:** through such means as party organizations, popularly elected institutions, admission of business interests to the party, some coverage of official corruption and policy debates.
- **Dense networks of patronage** based on personal relationships and ascriptive ties.
- **Repression:** the state acts firmly if limits on criticism of the party, one-party rule, government policies, and/or "Ho Chi Minh thought" are exceeded.
- **Ideology/ tradition:** Vietnamese traditional culture and decades of Communist Party rule have made arguments about collective interests intuitively convincing to most people without need for further elaboration or justification.

Threats to Regime

At this point in time, there are few serious threats.

- Corruption: inequality of treatment of citizens may undermine the state's performance legitimacy.
- Performance legitimacy may quickly erode if Vietnam experiences an economic downturn.
- China: If China chooses to increase economic and other pressures on Vietnam, the latter's economy will suffer with negative consequences for the reform process.
- Unresolved land disputes. Land has been one of the most contentious issues in
- Vietnamese politics, as the state and private interests have sought to obtain land from peasants and other lower income groups since decollectivization began.
- Labor unrest, although it is relatively less than in many countries.

Evolutionary Path (5-10 years)

Political change will most likely come, gradually and unevenly, primarily from within the Party. The country is likely to continue on its trajectory towards "softer" authoritarianism, with improved governance and regulation that bring broad societal benefits. The populace at large will likely be willing to tolerate political limitations as long as economic reforms bring material benefits. If, however, Vietnam suffers a severe economic downturn, the VCP may slow or halt reforms in the face of unrest.

ZIMBABWE

Political and Economic Systems

Zimbabwe is an electoral authoritarian regime. On paper, its constitution prescribes a semi-presidential system of government with universal elections for president and parliament. In practice, it is a militarized regime, and until the 2008 parliamentary elections, was effectively a one-party state, with the interpenetration of the security forces and the ruling party. President Mugabe's Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) has been the dominant party since independence in 1980, and has used violent repression to remain in office. The rule of law has eroded because the ruling party has neutralized the judiciary and mobilized violence by war veterans and ZANU-PF youth. Gross economic mismanagement and the seizure of white-owned farms and businesses have led to rampant unemployment, poverty, corruption, and hyperinflation. The World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Report ranks Zimbabwe 132 out of 133 countries.

The parliamentary elections ended ZANU-PF's monopoly of power. The opposition party, Movement for Democratic Change, won the majority of seats in parliament, and thereby the prime minister's office. The opposition candidate, Tsvangirai, also won the first round of presidential election, but the security chiefs allegedly refused to let Mugabe surrender power. Instead, they called for a runoff election and unleashed a violent crackdown on the opposition, leading to Tsvangirai's withdrawal from the race. After protracted negotiations, Tsvangirai entered into a power-sharing agreement with Mugabe and became prime minister in 2009. Mugabe remains head of the armed services, but the two men share responsibility for the Home Affairs Ministry, which oversees the police. However, the power-sharing government has failed to end rights abuses against ZANU-PF's opponents or to institute fundamental reforms.

Sources of Regime Resilience

- Zimbabwe is endowed with rich mineral resources. Diamond mining, particularly from the Marange diamond fields in eastern Zimbabwe, provides a parallel source of revenue for ZANU-PF and its repressive machinery.
- Increasing state intervention in the economy has left few independent sources of wealth outside the hands of the state or those connected to ZANU-PF.
- Over the past decade, the government restructured the judiciary with party loyalists effectively stamping out any judicial independence. For its part, the parliament does not have the authority or capacity to check and balance the executive.
- The regime has relied on the shared experience of the liberation struggle and a common hope for an independent Zimbabwe to maintain support from the security forces and war veterans. It has politicized the military and police forces and used war veterans and youth militias to enforce its rule.

Threats to the Regime

- Zimbabwe has experienced a sharp economic contraction over the past decade that has reduced gross national product by almost half. The collapsing economy has led to struggles over dwindling resources within the party-state institutions. Lower ranking, poorly paid soldiers rioted in late 2008 and early 2009 prompting the Government of National Unity to make payments to the military a priority.
- Power is less concentrated than it was before the 2008 elections. Although limited in what it can do, MDC does occupy a seat at the table within the government of national unity. Succession issues and the worsening economy also have increased cracks within the military/ZANU-PF elite.

Evolutionary Path (5-10 years)

There is a good chance that the coalition government will last until the next election. The military/ZANU-PF elite has an incentive to maintain the arrangement in order to garner a fig leaf of legitimacy, while the MDC has an incentive to maintain its seat at the table. Real change is unlikely to occur in this arrangement where the military and ZANU-PF still wield disproportionate power. Change is most likely to occur in the next election.