



# Prospects for Democratic Transition in the Middle East and North Africa:

*Implications of the Central/East  
European and African Experiences*

**October 18-20, 2007  
Budapest, Hungary**

*A Conference Sponsored by:*



**Council for a Community  
of Democracies**

**International Centre for Democratic Transition  
Kawakibi Democracy Transition Center  
Center for Democracy and Election Management**

*Funding for this Conference was provided by*  
**The Smith Richardson Foundation**



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# Preface

Dear Participants and Friends:

The document you have before you is the product of a unique and inspiring collaboration. It is offered to you in the hope that it will enable you, and many others, to assist in a broad process of peaceful, non-violent transition to democracy in countries of the Middle East and North Africa region in the years ahead.

In mid-October 2007, academics, democracy advocates and civil society activists from three different regions of the world came together in Budapest to examine how they might learn from one another. Entitled "Prospects for Democratic Transition in the Middle East and North Africa: Implications of the Central/East European and African Experiences," the three-day conference was jointly sponsored by the Council for a Community of Democracies (CCD), the Budapest-based International Centre for Democratic Transition (ICDT), Kawakibi Democracy Transition Center (KADEM) in Tunis, and the Center for Democracy and Election Management (CDEM) of American University in Washington, D.C., with funding provided by the Smith Richardson Foundation. A preparatory conference took place at American University in March 2007 to define issues and goals for the Budapest Conference. The Conference took place in the context of -- and less than one month before -- the Fourth Ministerial Conference of the Community of Democracies, in Bamako, Mali and therefore contributed to the planning by civil society for the biennial conference.

The motivation for this conference was a shared perception among sponsors and participants that successful transitions to democracy, of the kinds that have taken place in Latin America, Central/East Europe, and Sub-Saharan Africa, can serve as examples and suggest strategies and paths that might be taken by countries that have not yet experienced democratic transitions. Participants from countries which have had a democratic transition spoke about the challenges they confronted and how they were overcome. Insights were offered as to how they resolved the many problems they encountered on the road to democracy; those who came from the Middle East and North Africa assessed the obstacles faced by democratic development in their countries and exchanged ideas for possible next steps. Their remarks have been collected and synthesized in this report. Appended are a number of background documents which served to inform participants before and during the meeting. There is a separate section with Conclusions and Recommendations, suggesting possible future courses of action by those in the region and identifying possible ways that friends from countries that have experienced democratic transitions might be of help.

Drawing on those Conclusions and Recommendations from the conference, as reflected in this report, the organizers and participants will collaborate in moving this process forward, with all interested players in each country, to foster peaceful democratic transitions. We welcome your interest in our project and look forward to your continuing participation as this challenging task moves ahead.

The conference organizers wish to express their appreciation for the work of Steven Wagenseil, who served as the general editor of the final document. They also wish to thank Daniel Bartha (ICDT) and Daniel Hollingsworth (CCD) for their organizational contributions which made the conference possible.

Please stay in touch. Your suggestions for how we may work together in the future are most welcome and indeed vital to our continuing success.

With Best Regards,



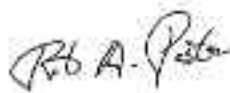
Richard C. Rowson, President  
Council for a Community of Democracies



Mohsen Marzouk, Executive Director  
Kawakibi Democracy Transition Center



Robert R. LaGamma, Executive Director  
Council for a Community of Democracies



Robert Pastor, Director  
Center for Democracy and Election Management  
American University



Istvan Gyarmati, Director  
International Centre for Democratic Transition

# Conference Program

## Thursday, October 18, 2007

### **1: Introduction to the Conference and Participants**

Hosts: Istvan Gyarmati, Executive Director of ICDDT;  
Dick Rowson, President of CCD  
Bob LaGamma, Executive Director of CCD

### **2: Overview of Transitions to Democracy**

Chair: Robert LaGamma  
Panelists: Robert Pastor, Laurence Whitehead and  
David Kilgour

### **3: Some Considerations of the Historical and Political Context for Transition**

Presenter: Istvan Gyarmati

### **4: Challenges to Transition in the Middle East and North Africa**

Chair: Amr Hamzawy  
Panelists: Sameer Jarrah and Emad Shahin

### **5: Overcoming Dictatorship, Laying Foundations for a Democratic Future**

Chair: Sándor Kóles, Director of Programs, ICDDT  
Panelists: Gediminas Šerkšnys – Lithuania  
Ebrahim Ebrahim – South Africa  
Ivan Bába – Hungary

At a meeting in the historic Hungarian Parliament Building, a Panel of three speakers, from three countries, described three very different experiences.

## Friday, October 19, 2007

### **6: Case Studies of Transitions to Democracy in Eastern Europe**

Panelists: Tamás Meszerics – Hungary  
István Hegedüs – Hungary  
Miroslav Kusy – Slovakia  
Gediminas Šerkšnys – Lithuania  
Iryna Chupryna – Ukraine  
Richard Rowson – The Role of Diplomatic Support in Ukraine

### **7: Overview of Transitions to Democracy in Africa**

Chair: Herman Cohen  
Panelists: Bob LaGamma, Paul Graham, and Kent Obee

### **8: Case Studies: Transitions to Democracy in Ghana and South Africa**

Panelists: Audrey Gadzekpo, Allister Sparks, Paul Graham, and Ebrahim Ebrahim

### **9: Some Lessons from Latin America**

Chair: Dick Rowson  
Panelist: Robert Pastor

## Saturday, October 20, 2007

### **10: Attitudes towards Democracy in the Middle East and North Africa**

Presenter: Ahmed Younis

### **11: Democratic Aspirations and Institutional Foundations for Democracy in Eastern Europe, South Africa and Ghana before Transition**

Panelists: Paul Graham, Audrey Gadzekpo, and David Kilgour

### **12: The Relevance of the Central/Eastern European and African Experiences to the MENA Region and The Ingredients Necessary to Achieve Transition**

Panelists: Mohsen Marzouk, Hoda Chalak, Nasser Amin, Amr Hamzawy, Reza Eslami-Somea, and Emad Shahin

### **13: Identifying Lessons for Democratic Transitions in the Middle East and North Africa**

Panelists: Laurence Whitehead, Bob LaGamma, Paul Graham, Mohsen Marzouk, Emad Shahin, Allister Sparks, and Herman Cohen

# List of Participants

**Nasser Amin**, Director, Arab Center for the Independence of the Judiciary and the Legal Profession, Egypt

**Ivan Bába**, Member, Executive Committee, International Centre for Democratic Transition; former State Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Hungary

**Dániel Bartha**, Program Officer, International Centre for Democratic Transition, Hungary

**César Beltran**, former U.S. Information Officer, Member, ICDT Advisory Board, USA

**Hoda El Khatib Chalak**, Coordinator, Organisation for Civil Action, Lebanon

**Iryna Chupryna**, Co-founder of PORA Civic Party, Ukraine

**Herman Cohen**, former Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Johns Hopkins University, USA

**Ebrahim Ebrahim**, Coordinator for International Relations, African National Congress, South Africa

**Zsófia Elek**, Student, Faculty of Political Science, University ELTE, Hungary

**Audrey Gadzekpo**, Senior Lecturer, University of Ghana; Center for Democratic Development, Ghana

**Paul Graham**, Executive Director, Institute for Democracy in South Africa, South Africa



**István Gyarmati**, *Director, International Centre for Democratic Transition, Hungary*

**Amr Hamzawy**, *Senior Associate, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Egypt*

**István Hegedüs**, *Chairman, Hungarian Europe Society, Hungary*

**Daniel Hollingsworth**, *Program Officer, Council for a Community of Democracies, USA*

**Sameer Jarrah**, *President, Arab World Center for Democratic Development & Human Rights, Jordan*

**David Kilgour**, *Board Member, Council for a Community of Democracies; former Member of Parliament, Canada*

**Sándor Köles**, *Program Director, International Centre for Democratic Transition, Hungary*

**Miroslav Kusy**, *former Minister of Information, Professor of the Comenius University, Slovakia*

**Robert LaGamma**, *Executive Director, Council for a Community of Democracies, USA*

**Mohsen Marzouk**, *Executive Director, Kawakibi Democracy Transition Center, Tunisia*

**Tamás Meszerics**, *Senior Adviser, International Centre for Democratic Transition, Hungary*

**Kent Obee**, *former Senior U.S. Official for the Middle East and Africa, USA*

**Gergely Pap**, *Program Assistant, International Centre for Democratic Transition, Hungary*

**Robert Pastor**, *Director, Center for Democracy and Election Management, American University, USA*

**Richard Rowson**, *President, Council for a Community of Democracies, USA*

**Gediminas Šerkšnys**, *Ambassador, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Lithuania*

**Emad El-Din Shahin**, *Visiting Professor, Harvard University; American University in Cairo, Egypt*

**Reza Eslami-Somea**, *Assistant Professor, Shahid Beheshti University, Tehran, Iran*

**Allister Sparks**, *Writer/Journalist, South Africa*

**Nóra Szegő**, *Program Assistant, International Centre for Democratic Transition, Hungary*

**Laurence Whitehead**, *Fellow, Nuffield College, Oxford, United Kingdom*

**Steven Wagenseil**, *Consultant, Council for a Community of Democracies, USA*

**Ahmed Younis**, *Senior Analyst, Gallup Center for Muslim Studies, USA*

Based on examples provided by participants in Central/East European and African transitions to democracy and the analysis of Middle East and North African participants, it was above all recognized that each transition is unique. Paths to transition cannot be imitated. Democracy activists should avoid trying to transfer precise models from other countries. Instead, transition should be homegrown, reflecting the needs and realities of the people and their society and emerging from a specific tradition, culture and historical context.

There was also a consensus that previous transitions in other regions and countries should be carefully studied for ideas, strategies and inspiration for institutional change as well as human rights.

Participants recognized that successful democratic transition must be based on **non-violent** means. They agreed that there are common key elements – **rule of law, civil society, free media, and an electoral process for the transfer of power** – that are necessary conditions if democratic transition is to occur. They also highlighted the importance of **providing incentives to encourage transitions and developing a dialogue for change** in the MENA region. Finally, they explored the influence and **role of the international community** in assisting with democratic transition in the region.

## I. The Necessity of Non-Violence

Participants overwhelmingly agreed that democratic movements are more likely to be successful if there is a broad agreement to refrain from resorting to violence. Change is possible in the Middle East without societal collapse which no one seeks. Violent attempts to overthrow an authoritarian regime, whether those attempts are internally- or externally-based, risk threatening the stability of society and opening the way to enduring conflicts. Peaceful protest and civil disobedience are effective tools in themselves and also allow the international community more effectively to rally in support of the cause of democratic change and provide additional support for democratic forces. Long-term democratic change is founded on the development of stable institutions and national unity through use of compromise and consultation; violence threatens to undermine each of these components, thereby threatening long-term prospects for stable, peaceful democratic change.

- **All advocates for democracy, domestic and international, should make a clear, public pledge to pursue their goals through non-violent means.**

## II. Key Institutions for Democratic Transition

### A. Rule of Law

Establishment of the Rule of Law through constitutional means is key to democratic change. In the Middle East and North Africa, the potential opening provided by crises of succession requires an effective legal framework to produce a democratic result. Experience elsewhere has shown that the most effective legal framework will include the following: provisions for some sort of interim regime when moving from an authoritarian regime to democracy; an **independent judiciary**, the catalyst by which individuals can attain their rights; Parliamentary immunity, allowing MPs to speak without threat of retribution; internal regulations for Parliamentary conduct and the exercise of power; freedom for active, democratic political parties; the right to protest peacefully; and the protection of minority rights, which are especially important given the intensity of the Sunni/Shia divide and other societal splits in the region.

The strengthening of **parliament** as the ultimate law-making body can serve as a major step in the transition process. This can be achieved by expanding political party representation, by allowing for a greater diversity of views on major issues of the day. Ceding more authority to bodies of representative government diminishes the absolute power of the executive.

- **Judicial and parliamentary institutions should be strengthened through provision of adequate staff and appropriate training.**

Although many individuals have had parliamentary experience over the past decades, opposition political parties in the region tend to be weak and fragmented. They also suffer from aging, elitist leadership, lack of contact with “the street,” instances of corruption, and lack of internal democracy.

- **An effort should be made to address those issues through targeted training.**

Public opinion polls taken in the MENA region demonstrate the strong appeal of democratic ideas to virtually all of its peoples. It was generally agreed that religion should not be considered a barrier to the introduction of democracy in the region as Islam is compatible with democracy and that the strong tradition of Islamic jurisprudence can serve as a strong foundation for a democratic order.

- **As religion is central to political life in the region, we urge a higher priority be given to identifying the links between Islam and democracy and to fostering research and public dialogue on the subject.**

**Proposal:** It was noted that there are scholars in the region who are working to better understand the implications of Islamic law for the modern world, including how Qu'ranic principles relate to democracy and human rights in the Middle East and North Africa. It was suggested that efforts could be made to increase the awareness of these discussions both internally within the region and by involving a wider audience outside of the region. Collaboration with religious leaders who are connected to the people could help demonstrate to citizens in the region that democratic change is not incompatible with their religion. Religion is an essential component of society in the region that cannot be ignored, so the energetic engagement to this dialogue is vital in order to connect the people to democratic values.

### B. Civil Society

Participants were unanimous that a **vibrant, mobilized civil society** is essential to democratic change. It was recognized from the case studies of Central/East Europe and Africa that viable civil society institutions are fundamental to democratic transition in any society. An effective and united civil society is able to articulate the interests of fragmented groups, including rural interests, not otherwise represented in existing authoritarian systems in the Middle East and North Africa connecting individuals and institutions with the larger movement. Institutions like the Kawakibi Democracy Transition Center, which aid in the development of a regional civil society network, are essential to this task.

- **Assistance should be provided for the development of strong institutions of civil society in every country of the region.**
- **Assistance should be provided to help organize and support local, national and regional networks, which will allow nongovernmental actors to share experiences and cooperate in the assertion of democratic values and human rights.**

Civil society actors in the Middle East and North Africa will be most effective in opposing established authoritarian regimes if they focus first on the shared goal of conducting free and fair elections as a means achieving broad political participation of religious institutions, legal associations, and community groups of all kinds. Once this goal is realized, parties will usually subsequently disagree on other issues of importance as is typically characteristic of the democratic process.

- **A good starting point for civil society collabora-**

**tion is agreement on the shared goal of conducting free and fair elections.**

By insisting on the practice of democracy within their own organizations, and committing to non-violence, civil society actors will be more effective in promoting democratic governance in society as a whole.

- **In order to be effective in promoting democracy, civil society organizations and political parties must internalize democratic standards themselves.**
- **Incentives such as the Silver Olive Tree Award offered by the Kawakibi Center can serve to encourage innovation on the part of civil society leaders.**

Finally, participants agreed that **youth** engagement is a critical component to the development of civil society. Student and youth movements have provided the impetus for change as demonstrated by the Orange Revolution in Ukraine. Youth movements have less invested in preserving the status quo than older, more established groups and must be engaged if lasting democratic change is to be achieved.

- **Without the involvement of youth a democracy movement clearly has no future, therefore youth must be included at all stages of the process.**

**Proposal:** Participants agreed that an essential component to the development of civil society is the creation of a culture of human rights and democracy beginning with youth and consistent with local traditions. But ultimate success requires the education of all citizens, the potential electorate of any democracy. The **Global Strategic Plan for Democracy Education** proposed by civil society representatives from the 2nd Biennial of the Community of Democracies in Seoul, Korea and formulated at Pocantico, New York in 2003, provides a framework for enhancing democracy education around the world. Specific recommendations for the Middle East and North Africa were proposed at a follow-up conference in 2005. Implementation of this plan has been called for by the 4th Biennial of the Community of Democracies; every effort should be made to meet that challenge in the MENA region.

### C. Free Media

The development of **independent media voices** was also identified as a requirement for democratic transition. Free and active media are necessary to inform the public about issues and developments and to ensure transparency and accountability of government authorities. Control over the media is

closely guarded by authoritarian regimes, because once press freedom is established, the government loses its monopoly on information and becomes much more vulnerable to the development of popular movements. It was noted that Freedom House has demonstrated that a freer media lends greater energy to political mobilization.

For media to become more effective and credible requires that journalists acquire the professional skills needed for them to become credible in the eyes of their audience and thereby provide new perspectives on public policy. Clearly, to carry out their professional responsibilities members of the profession need to be protected from recrimination and retaliation by those in power.

- **Training and protection of journalists is clearly indispensable for a strengthening of independent media and the promotion of democracy in the region.**

The Internet has emerged as a most powerful tool for the dissemination of information throughout the region. Restrictions imposed on the traditional media are difficult to impose on the electronic media, so an increased emphasis on the Internet as a media resource can aid in the development of democracy and assist in the development of a national and international dialogue on democratic transition.

- **Civil society and democracy activists should be assisted to fully exploit the channels of communication and information resources available through the Internet.**

#### D. Electoral Process

Democracy cannot exist without free and fair elections. While it was recognized that democracy extends beyond elections, participants maintained that free, fair and transparent elections must be a primary goal shared by all parties interested in democratic change.

However, even elections that fall short of being recognized as free and fair can provide a point of departure for progress. This is important as elections are now nearly universally used to provide an appearance of legitimacy for even the most authoritarian regimes. Even fraudulent elections carry the implicit assertion that legitimacy comes from the will of the people, which can provide an opening for democratic forces.

Fraudulent elections have sometimes served as a trigger for genuine democratic reform, as was also demonstrated in Ukraine's Orange Revolution. The identification of rigged elections, combined with the development of an active civil

society, can provide a rallying point for democratic activists and call into question the legitimacy of a regime that manipulates elections as a means of maintaining power.

Finally, while most attention is focused on national elections and referenda, local elections and local politics should not be ignored. Even state-managed local elections can instill a habit of democracy. Local politics can provide a more direct, tangible connection between the political process and the people and can create a foundation for wider democratic transition at the national level.

- **To provide additional opportunities for the identification of fraudulent elections, independent national electoral commissions must be developed and supported, and available election observation or monitoring organizations invited in.**
- **Voter education and training of electoral officials, both essential to the improvement of the electoral process, must be provided.**
- **MENA leaders should be invited to observe elections in Europe and Africa to gain practical experience.**
- **Codes of conduct in the electoral process must be adopted for government officials, parties and candidates, the media, and domestic and international election observers.**
- **Civil society should be encouraged to play an active role in local politics, where it can make its greatest impact.**

### III. Creating Incentives to Encourage Transitions

Communication is an essential element of the democratic transition, especially informal, private contacts among opposing forces before any public contacts take place. Such communication can help to counteract the inherent resilience of incumbent regimes and avoid development of hardened positions that can lead to violent confrontations. Important to rule of law in transitional situations is an emphasis on **non-retributive policies** in the emerging legal structure with respect to members of the former regime. Central/East European and African examples demonstrate that such an approach is more conducive to democratic change, as elites in the regime have less to fear from change that is non-retributive and inclusive.

This can allow for the "Spanish model" of reform to take hold, in which moderates of the opposition are able to cooperate with reformists from the old regime. Another example, the

Hungarian “roundtable,” involved compromise that enabled representatives from throughout the society, including those of the former regime, to play a role in building a new order. Two contrasting examples can be found in Benin and Togo. In Benin, President Kerekou called for free and fair elections and was willing to risk losing. He preceded the organization of those elections by calling a national conference of all interested parties in the country. In Togo, President Eyadema’s regime was not willing to run the risk of losing power in free elections, as the ruling minority perceived it would be called to account for the many human rights abuses it had committed. Change in the Togo case was perceived by the regime as a zero-sum game.

The non-retributive approach provides incentives to ruling elites and promotes a greater degree of reconciliation, which is essential to the consolidation of democratic change. In South Africa, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission allowed for a process of national healing while providing an incentive to members of the former government to speak openly without fear of punishment.

Finally, a policy that focuses on ridding the government of all elements connected to the former regime, such as the lustration (“making pure”) policy in Czechoslovakia that barred former communists from participating, can cost the new government valuable human capital. There are often skilled bureaucrats who, if they become converted to the value of democratic governance, can be vital resources in the effective functioning of the new government. The temptation of revenge will be strong, especially when the authoritarian regimes have been most violently repressive, but any opportunity to promote reconciliation through the legal system should be explored.

- **Once a transition process has begun, democratic activists must develop channels to build a dialogue with authorities on their inclusion, without retribution, in the new democratic order.**

#### IV. Generating a Dialogue on Democratic Transition in the Middle East and North Africa

Greater availability of ideas on democracy offered in translations or through the work of indigenous authors and published in the MENA region would allow for a fuller exploration of democratic possibilities. The increase in independent publishing outlets within the region will allow democratic thinkers to share their ideas more widely within the bound-

aries of their countries and throughout the region as a whole. Participants suggested they could imagine an Arab “Federalist Papers” emerging from a compilation of Arab literature on human rights and politics. UNESCO could play a role in such an initiative.

- **A dialogue on democratic transition should be opened through translation and indigenous publication of relevant documents.**

Cultural and educational exchanges were also recognized as essential for the development of civil society. While broadened educational and cultural exchanges with the West are important, exchanges with civil society entities in Central/East Europe and Africa, which have contributed to democratic transition in their own regions, can be especially powerful in promoting a more fully developed civil society in the Middle East and North Africa.

- **Governments willing to foster democratic change in the MENA region should engage energetically in cultural and educational exchanges with Central/East Europe, Africa and Latin America that promote democratic ideals.**

It is clear that the dialogue about democracy is considerably enhanced in an age of globalization, notably through access to ideas circulating on the Internet, whose potential should be exploited in this regard. Important emphasis was placed on the role of the diaspora in democratic transitions and the communication of ideas from abroad.

Democratic thinkers should develop an **idea strategy**. It is important that common definitions of democracy and democratic objectives be established. That strategy should include the strengthening of civil society, rule of law, a free press and an electoral system and should be addressed to scholars, the media, secularists, religious groups, business and the ruling elite. Such a strategy can evolve into a framework that can serve as the basis for a pact between democracy advocates and their governments.

- **A regional think tank should be created with this goal in mind.**
- **In addition, a strategic group could be established, comprised of participants and co-sponsors of the Budapest conference, to carry forward its ideas and follow through the process of assisting democracy transition in the MENA region.**

Often a dialogue with hardliners in the regime is eschewed because it is considered fruitless. However, in the South African case the arduous negotiation process involved Nelson Mandela

in forty seven meetings with his Afrikaner adversaries. In numerous cases of African transition the concept of a National Conference was essential to generating dialogue among all elements of society and to defining an agreed upon framework for a new constitutional order.

- **It was suggested that a broad movement with a widely agreed upon platform should be created, an Arab Citizenship Movement that would eventually lead to a diversity of parties and factions within a democratic framework.**
- **In addition, to empower a new generation of leaders and transition managers, the possible establishment of a Kawakibi Chair on Democracy Transition, leading to a Master's Degree in the subject, should be explored.**

## V. The Role of the International Community

When democratic governments use national interests and security to justify policies that violate principles of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law, it provides support for authoritarians seeking to do the same. Regardless of whether such actions take place in the realm of domestic or foreign policy, they open Western governments up to charges of hypocrisy and limit the effectiveness of those working to encourage and support democratic change in the Middle East and North Africa. Just as the presence of democratic progress in a nearby region can encourage similar progress in the MENA region, a regression of democracy elsewhere can also be counter-productive in countries where democracy is struggling to take hold or is altogether non-existent.

Participants also strongly agreed that established democracies must lead by example. The West is seen as hypocritical because it often favors security over democracy in the Middle East. In particular, the perception of uncritical U.S. support for Israel in its conflict with the Palestinians, the unilateral U.S. invasion of Iraq without approval from the United Nations, and U.S. efforts to impede the universal effectiveness of the International Criminal Court (ICC) are all seen as examples of policies that weaken or counteract the benefits of U.S. support for democracy. Such U.S. policies while rightly criticized for impeding transitions to democracy are often improperly used as an excuse for inaction. Serious crimes, including crimes against humanity and war crimes, have been committed throughout the region, both by Arab regimes and by Israel; it is therefore imperative that the ICC be empowered by all states.

- **Without a change in U.S. opposition to the Rome Treaty establishing ICC and its efforts to persuade others to oppose the Treaty and the Court, progress toward democratization in the region is unlikely.**
- **Advocates of democracy in the West should encourage their governments to take a less ambiguous position on democracy in the Middle East and North Africa, by**
  - + **engaging in discussions on Islamic values and principles,**
  - + **encouraging the development of civil society,**
  - + **working with governments to strengthen the rule of law, supporting the freedom of media, and providing assistance in the observation of elections,**
  - + **emphasizing the importance of non-violence.**
- **In addition, Western democracies must make every effort to preserve and advance democratic freedoms, as any backsliding at home will be seen as justification for repression in other countries.**
- **Efforts must be continued and intensified to create an appreciation on the part of the European Union and related institutions of the vital need for genuine, productive partnership agreements with the Arab world that promote democracy in the region.**
- **U.S. and other Western governments should place the same emphasis on support for democratic transition in the Middle East and North Africa as they did for Central/East Europe at the end of the Cold War.**

It was emphasized above all that democratic change is primarily a domestic initiative that can be *assisted* by external forces. However, participants also recognized that the role of the international community, including neighboring states, regional, international and thematic organizations, and the national diaspora, is indispensable in the process of democratic change. The nature of the support provided by the international community can contribute significantly to the success or failure of a democratic transition and help mobilize a strong domestic movement in favor of democracy. In the case of a country such as Hungary it was thought that outside support made the transition to democracy considerably easier; in South Africa, the universal condemnation of Apartheid also lent support and legitimacy to a nascent democratic movement.

An important point voiced by participants from the Middle East and North Africa was that financial support for demo-

cratic transition is the least important aspect of support coming from the international community. Funding from the West, and in particular the United States, was deemed to be counterproductive in many instances to the development of democratic movements in the region, as it allows authorities to paint such movements as products of the West.

- **Donor country efforts to support democracy should focus on diplomatic support, cultural and educational exchanges, the development of regional support networks, and other less confrontational approaches.**

Ideas, models and strategies of recently established democracies are likely to be more relevant to the needs of democratization in the MENA region than those taken from long established Western democracies.

Western governments can actively support democratic movements in the region without undermining them. It was noted that Ukraine's Orange Revolution was possible because Western governments clearly and unanimously condemned attempts to forcefully disperse protesters as violations of international norms that would not be tolerated. Such vocal support for democratic activists was not provided in Azerbaijan, which was identified as one contributing factor in the failure of the Azeri democratic movement.

- **When genuine, non-violent democratic movements do emerge in the region, it is essential that attempts by authoritarian regimes to repress them are met with vocal and unified condemnation from the international community.**

Successful steps toward democratic transition in the Middle East and North Africa, such as more inclusive policies, respect for minority and women's rights, and similar institutional developments, can be positive factors even when they do not occur in or result in a fully democratic environment.

- **Such steps should be recognized and encouraged by external actors, as they have the potential to influence others in the region seeking to enact similar reforms.**
- **The West should make clear its willingness to accept and work with religion-based parties, provided they adhere to democratic principles both before and after elections.**

Technical and advisory support, linked with diplomatic pressure, rather than efforts to promote dramatic regime change; solidarity with emerging democratic movements in the region;

and assistance to ensure that elections are conducted freely and fairly are approaches that the international community should take to support the long-term development of democratic practices in the Middle East and North Africa.

- **Activities by the international community should always maintain a focus on supporting the citizens of the country, as it is they who must be the initiators of democratic change.**

A panoply of institutions designed to assist with transitions stands ready to provide ideas and resources to help facilitate and consolidate transitions including the Council for a Community of Democracies, the International Centre for Democratic Transition (Budapest), the Netherlands Institute for Multi-Party Democracy, the Westminster Foundation, the National Endowment for Democracy, International IDEA and the German Stiftungen among others.

- **Their resources and experience should be brought to bear to assist local efforts to bring democracy to countries of the region.**

**Proposal:** The “*Diplomat’s Handbook on Democracy Development Support*” is designed to foster closer relations between government (diplomats) and civil society and is an ideal instrument for linking democratic transition efforts of civil society in the MENA region with external support of such efforts on the part of democratic governments outside the region.

# Session Reports

## Session 1: Introduction to the Conference and Participants

Hosts: **Istvan Gyarmati**, Executive Director of ICDDT;  
**Dick Rowson**, President of CCD  
**Bob LaGamma**, Executive Director of CCD

Welcoming participants from many countries, **Ambassador Gyarmati** declared that democracy does not come “fast or easy.” He cited the President of Afghanistan, Hamid Karzai, when asked by an American official why after five years the country was not democratic? Karzai replied, “It took you over 200 years!”

The question before this conference, said Gyarmati, was not “if” democracy, but “how”. He pointed out that ICDDT was established to help others learn how to make the transition to democracy by sharing the experience of those who have recently gone through the process – rather than through the eyes of “established democracies,” which often have forgotten how their democracy evolved in the first place.

**Rowson** cited the four-way collaboration among the co-sponsors- ICDDT, Kawakibi Democracy Transition Center (KADEM), American University’s Center for Democracy and Election Management and the Council for a Community of Democracies (CCD), which together made this conference possible. He characterized the conference as a “great experiment” to determine whether home-grown democracy in the Middle East/ North Africa can benefit from the experience of Africa south of the Sahara and that of Central/ East Europe. He referred, in that connection, to a recent article in the “Financial Times” entitled “Democracy Is Not Necessarily What the World Wants” and a letter-to-the-editor commenting on it, protesting this premise. In fact, said the letter-writer, the “philosophical underpinnings” for democracy can be found in many parts of the world, from the ancient Greeks to the ancient Confucian scholar Mencius who prescribed that the people should select their own leaders. As a matter of fact, the letter-writer said, the philosophical underpinnings of Fascism, Communism, Nazism and Colonialism are curiously concentrated in the West.



*Robert Pastor, Center for Democracy and Election Management, American University, USA; Cesar Beltran, ICDDT, Hungary; Kent Obee, specialist in Middle East and African Affairs, USA; Ahmed Younis, Gallup Poll, USA – participate in the opening of the conference.*

**Rowson** said that democracy works because it is based on the Rule of Law and free discourse. What has worked in C/EE and Africa, in that respect, will be the subject of this meeting including how that experience may apply to the current needs of Middle East and North African (MENA) countries. If action resulting from this experience is taken in the MENA region, the “experiment” can be judged a success. So, an equal burden is placed on those from that area to draw conclusions from what is articulated by those coming from Central/East Europe and Africa. The aim is for the four sponsors ICDDT, CCD, KADEM and CDEM to work together with participants after the conference in the task of pursuing democracy transition in the MENA area.

**LaGamma** expressed the hope that the meeting would develop for MENA attendees a “document-outline” of what is thought to be feasible, based on the experience of Africa and C/EE. To assist in that effort, a report on each session will attempt to distill what was discussed and how the experiences might be applied to the MENA region. What needs to be kept in mind, he said, is that prospects for a transition to democracy once thought to be virtually “impossible” in South Africa and Communist-controlled C/EE countries, did succeed in those areas a historical outcome that leads us to believe it can also succeed in the Middle East and North Africa. He offered the assistance of CCD in this endeavor.

The Community of Democracies Biennial Ministerial Conference in Bamako, November 14-17, 2007, will be the culmination of a two-year effort to develop a civil society structure paralleling that of governments in the CD. These regional networks have now been recognized as partners with governments. Both civil society and governments are now involved in defining and acting upon major issues identified by civil society representatives who have participated in six regional round tables. Those regions are represented on CD's International Steering Committee. CCD serves as its Secretariat and stands ready with the International Center for Democratic Transition to follow through after this conference on democracy transition projects in the MENA area.

## Session 2: Overview of Transitions to Democracy

Chair: **Robert LaGamma (CCD)**  
Panelists: **Robert Pastor, Laurence Whitehead  
and David Kilgour**

The main goal of the conference was defined as an exploration of experiences in a number of countries in Central and East Europe and Africa that have experienced successful democratic transitions in order to identify lessons of potential value for the Middle East and North Africa. The panelists examined essential features emerging from democratic transitions of the past generation.

**Pastor** focused on the centrality of elections in the transition process and noted the absence of any university in the world that systematically teaches and conducts research about democracies and elections. He observed that transition to democracy is a never ending process and cited the 87 recommendations of the Carter/Baker Commission on improving U.S. elections. He said a group of his students, when asked for definitions of democracy, had submitted 177 distinct definitions; he grouped those definitions in three categories. The first considers democracy as an end in itself for which the goals are social justice, and such things as better health care and education. He warned that if citizens do not find that a democratic government delivers on such aspirations there is a danger of violent rejection or overthrow of such a government. The second category of democracy is a system free of intervention in which countries make their own independent

decisions, a system that has much in common with authoritarian regimes. The third is democracy as a system in which people can choose their own leaders competitively in a free environment, in which there is competition among all parties at periodic intervals, with an opportunity to replace incumbents.

**Pastor** stated that while no democracy is perfect, the third form provides effective authority and allows the people as a whole to invigorate government. He concluded by noting that all countries are in some state of transition.

**Whitehead** described democratic transition as a long-term and reversible process, not at all a quick fix and not the natural order of things. He said it was important to ask "transition from what" citing a great variety of regimes in our time that have undergone transitions including the earlier European changes in Spain, Portugal and Greece in the 1970s, lessons that were later applied in Latin America. He suggested it would be illuminating to identify lessons learned from Latin American transitions that might be transferable. He also thought ideas raised at a recent conference in Taiwan on democratic transformations might travel to China and elsewhere.

**Whitehead** also surveyed transitions from authoritarian regimes and the dynamic process of opening up those systems. He suggested various "trigger conditions" that have led to transitions including military defeat, economic setbacks and other crises. He asked why authoritarian regimes lose control once those triggers occur. One reason, he offered, relates to the diaspora and the weight of opinion of nationals abroad. He observed that since most successful, prosperous



*Iryna Chupryna, Ukraine, Ebrahim Ebrahim, South Africa and Bob LaGamma and Dick Rowson, CCD, USA, participate in the opening day's discussion on the theoretical framework for democratic transitions.*

regimes in our time are democracies, citizens often feel they should emulate those models. He listed six avoidable mistakes we make in evaluating situations of potential transition:

1. failure to consider characteristics of specific countries (culture, traditions, history, social composition);
2. the tendency to over-generalize;
3. failing to take into account that the nature of external influence is dependent on circumstances;
4. the need for incentives (in the case of Europe, the OSCE's Copenhagen criteria);
5. external influences should not be overly prescriptive;
6. failure to take into account that there is only so much that can be done with failed states.

**Kilgour** turned to the issue of the controversial economic model advocated by some in Asia, especially in the form of China's extreme form of capitalism driven by a totalitarian political system. He argued that there is no correlation between economic growth and autocracy built upon fear.

### Session 3: Some Considerations Regarding the Historical and Political Context for Transition

Presenter: **Istvan Gyarmati**

**Gyarmati** described Central/East Europe as a region rich in experience of democratic transition. He reported on a recent joint meeting of the governments of Hungary and Slovenia which resulted in agreement by the two countries to work cooperatively in the area of assisting with transitions to democracy. Responding to the question why was there a need for an organization like his, the International Centre for Democratic Transition (ICDT), when other entities in this field already exist, he said that the demand is greater than the supply for help in achieving democratic transitions. He asserted that times and recipients of this assistance have changed and suggested that what he called "the democracy industry" is wasting money on ineffective projects.

After what **Gyarmati** described as the "fast, easy and cheap" democratic transition experiences in Central/East Europe, there has emerged a sense of doubt and hesitation to support change in light of what he termed "the deteriorating experience in Iraq." But with respect to Central/East Europe, **Gyarmati** asserted that democratic transition in the region would have been slower, more painful and perhaps not even successful without assistance.

**Gyarmati** countered the argument made by autocrats who hide behind "non-interference in the internal affairs" of their countries, by asserting that such interference is justified in our time to counter gross violations of rights. But he also warned of the dangers of intervention associated with what he called a new global awareness. He suggested that those who feel compelled to intervene sometimes destroy the institutions of others. He observed that the *Loya Jerga*, or Traditional National Assembly, that installed Hamid Karzai as President of Afghanistan conferred more legitimacy than subsequent elections, because it was seen as conforming to established indigenous decision-making traditions. He cautioned that in promoting democracy care must be exercised to avoid destroying fragile democratic structures and he also cautioned against what he called "the dictatorship of law" as opposed to the rule of law. He also complained about barriers to securing funding including the complexity of proposal writing and the bureaucracy that impedes funding of support for democracy.

He cited the ability to draw upon the Central/East European experiences with transition as the most important contribution his Centre has to offer. He noted the important priority that the ICDT placed in targeting youth in pre-transition or



*Audrey Gadzekpo, University of Ghana, relates her country's transition experiences to the challenges in the Middle East and North Africa, with Iryna Chupryna, PORA Civic Party, Ukraine.*

transition countries, recalling the considerable influence on East European youth traveling to the West which influenced their values and hastened change. But he observed that many of those opportunities no longer exist and urged that youth exchanges be enhanced. The ICDT Director argued that those who support stability over democracy will get neither. He lamented the return of authoritarianism in Russia and concluded by saying that the best definition of democracy was Lincoln's when he called it "government of the people, by the people and for the people."

## Session 4: Challenges to Transition in the Middle East and North Africa

Chair: **Amr Hamzawy**  
Panelists: **Sameer Jarrah and Emad Shahin**

**Jarrah** expressed disappointment in progress toward transition in the Middle East and North African (MENA) region since 1989, a period parallel to the successful transitions of Central and East Europe and Africa. He observed that freedom must precede democracy and that the pre-conditions for democracy should include a free media, a developed civil society and free elections. With regard to his country, Jordan, he observed that there has been much talk of freedom and moderation, but government has maintained tight control of civil society which has remained weak and unable to promote reform.

He argued that the invasion of Iraq has strengthened the hand of critics in Syria who warn that every effort must be made to prevent what happened there be repeated elsewhere. In part because of American intervention, he complained that his recent association with the Brookings Institution had marked him in Jordan as a U.S. agent. He charged that U.S. intervention in the region has been a major set-back for its civil society. In that context, he judged that the efforts by Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) to promote exchanges have been undermined by the involvement of the U.S. military in Iraq.

**Shahin** described Egypt and Jordan, two moderate countries, as both having experienced reverses in the period 2005-7. During this period, backsliding on any serious reform in Egypt has been exacerbated by polarization between Islamists and secularists. On the other hand, he noted that

civil society was gaining momentum and that parliamentary elections represented an opportunity to introduce change. Despite this positive sign, **Shahin** noted eight backward steps taken in Egypt and mirrored throughout much of the region:

1. the cancellation of local elections after parliamentary elections;
2. extended power granted to corrupt local governments;
3. crackdowns on judges and journalists;
4. denial of legitimization to political parties;
5. denial of legal status to the most important political parties;
6. harsh crackdown on the Muslim Brotherhood;
7. control and manipulation of elections;
8. withdrawal of support for democracy as an objective of the regime.

He cited the problem of voter apathy with maximum election turnouts of between five and 25 percent but reported that while the media retains some independence there had been a crackdown with four journalists sentenced to prison. He observed that the ruling NPP party enjoys an absolute majority in Parliament, an institution which has little power of oversight and acts like a rubber stamp for the President. One potential force for change is the judiciary which retains some degree of independence.

**Shahin** then spoke of three issues currently playing themselves out in Egypt:

1. President Mubarak's plan to have his son succeed him in the absence of military intervention and in the absence of a vice president;
2. the regime's efforts to restore control after 2005;
3. fear over the erosion of popular support for the government, due to corruption and its failure to improve the economy.

Required to make progress toward a transition are a competitive presidential election and a more heavily contested parliamentary election. The twenty percent vote for the Islamist party serves to frighten the West and dim its enthusiasm for elections, which are seen to carry the risk of success by the Islamist opposition. What is needed is strengthening of parliamentary power, to balance that of the President, as well as



*Egyptian Emad Shahin, Harvard, addresses the political challenges for democracy in Egypt, with Reza Somea, Shahid Beheshti University, Iran; Amr Hamzawy, Carnegie Endowment, Egypt; Mohsen Marzouk, Kawakibi Democracy Transition Center, Tunisia.*

term limitations on the President. Under the current situation external actors play the role of change agents.

At present **Shahin** noted that power resides in the State which is made up of the ruling party, the military and the bureaucracy, with the business community allied mainly with the state and judges maintaining some independence based upon their training and tradition. He sees the opposition political parties, both Islamist and secular, as lacking strength, and the Muslim Brotherhood as needing to transform itself into a mainstream national movement.

**Hamzawy** reflected on the willingness of regimes in the '70s and '80s to disperse power but observed that more recently they sought to maintain their authority and thereby stymied "an Arab spring." He suggested that Pastor's call for even bad elections leading to better ones did not hold true in the case of Jordan, where elections have been increasingly poor. He suggested that authoritarians in the region have learned to update their tools to keep ahead of those seeking change, whom he characterized as weak and divided. He noted that external actors still play a crucial role and maintain a degree of influence on events.

**Whitehead** said the succession crisis in dynastic Jordan is similar to that of Egypt. Jordan's problems have been compounded by Iraqi refugees, requiring infusions of Western aid. Security concerns impede liberalization, he argued. He recalled that there have been democratic elections in Lebanon and Iraq but also noted the problems of the Palestinian elections giving Hamas a victory and causing the West to have second thoughts about democracy in the region. He also noted that Hezbollah was not defeated on the battlefield by Israel, a development that introduces a new element of insecurity about change.

**Allister Sparks** argued that the major problem of reform in the MENA region relates to Western hypocrisy going back to earlier British policy in Iraq, the ouster of Mosadeq in Iran by the U.S., and in other regions, the ouster and deaths of leaders such as Lumumba and Allende. He asked whether the U.S. was truly prepared to accept a democratic election in the Middle East, citing Western disapproval of the Palestinian elections that empowered Hamas. He urged that a campaign be waged in the West to recognize and uphold the results of free and fair elections and suggested that sanctions imposed on the Palestinians by the U.S. have caused suffering noting that those actions have been called a crime against humanity.

**Pastor** posed the problem that a party, once elected, may close the door to other elections. Referring to the Shia-Sunni divide he asked if these differences can be resolved in ways that will allow pluralism, tolerance and minority rights.

**Mohsen Marzouk** stressed the importance of looking at the region in historical context, noting that there were instances of democratic rule in the Middle East early in the 20th century. He said it is important also to define the nature of the crisis: is it stagnation or paralysis, and is there a hidden dynamic? He too declared it is necessary to identify the rulers and who they depend upon. He observed that power is sometimes shared with tribes or families.

**Iryna Chupryna** discussed the tendency of elites to attempt to stay in power and noted the parallel in the post-Soviet period where rulers learned quickly how to discredit their opposition, citing what happened in Uzbekistan where 800 were killed and the dictator blamed the Muslim opposition.

**Audrey Gadzekpo** warned of the dangers of an initiative like that of the \$5 million "golden parachute" being offered by Sudanese billionaire Ibrahim to African leaders who step-down from power. **Hoda Chalak** identified as a major problem the weakness of civil society in the Arab world.

**Shahin** identified Western hypocrisy in distinguishing between the Middle East and Central/East Europe; in the latter case dictators were opposed whereas in the MENA region they are supported. He noted that in Algeria the West took the side of the military against the winners of an election. He said a fundamental question is with whom does the West side? Noting the failure of Arab liberalism since the 1930s, he suggested that the Islamists, not the liberals or secularists, speak the language of the people. **Jarrah** suggested that the democratic movement in the Arab world could be greatly aided by the use of soft power with an emphasis on exchanges.

## Session 5: Overcoming Dictatorship, Laying Foundations for a Democratic Future

Moderator: **Sándor Köles, Director of Programs, ICDT**  
Panel: **Gediminas Šerkšnys – Lithuania**  
**Ebrahim Ebrahim – South Africa**  
**Ivan Bába – Hungary**

At a meeting in the historic Hungarian Parliament Building, a Panel of three speakers, from three countries, described three very different democracy transition experiences.

Šerkšnys felt it was important to draw a distinction between the Central European and Baltic experiences. The Baltic States had been independent and were entirely subsumed into the USSR, not just as satellite states as was Hungary, so the end of Soviet regime meant recapture of independence. The USSR had total control over Lithuanian affairs – there were no separate economic relations, no trade with anybody (except inward, to Moscow), and no border authority. Also, Lithuania had Soviet troops stationed on its territory (more so than in other C/EE countries). Lithuania's portion of the Soviet economy was centrally planned and state-owned, serving USSR needs with no local market – all had to be privatized. Likewise, local industry all fed into Soviet industry, with no export markets at all; at independence they lost all internal markets, and so had to build new external ones.

When Lithuania achieved independence, it had to create wholly new Ministries for Foreign Affairs, Central Bank, etc. Those ministries were able to get the best personnel since the rigid apparatchiki were already ensconced in the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Economy and other established institutions. The legal system also had to be built from scratch -- the country needed a new Constitution and to provide for the legitimacy of civil society. It also had to get international recognition. Despite prior US/UK support for the Captive Nations in Central Europe, the Baltic states did not get swift recognition (probably for fear of angering or unsettling Moscow under Gorbachev). Iceland was the first to recognize Lithuania, followed, surprisingly, by Yeltsin-led Russia.

**Ebrahim** noted that the transition in South Africa was from apartheid racism to a democratic South Africa. The liberation leadership proclaimed it as a Ghandian struggle; it was non-violent (no hijackings, no suicide bombers, no attacks

against civilians). Oliver Tambo signed the Geneva Conventions, to reassure the world that they would treat civilians properly. The downside of this was that since the SA government kept total control of information flow, all the positive African National Congress rhetoric was rarely heard inside the country. The struggle received wide international support and legitimacy, which isolated the South African Government (trade sanctions, sports and cultural isolation, etc.). The ANC formed the United Democratic Front -- including political parties, trade unions, students and youth, religious organizations & other groups -- to challenge the international community and to make South Africa ungovernable. (Mass invasions of “white” beaches led to closure of all beaches, as the police just couldn't arrest everybody!)

The Pre-negotiation Phase: Offshore contacts were developed between security services and others with ANC personalities, seeking ways to resolve the crisis. Afrikaner intelligence met ANC leaders in other African countries to find out if they were really Communists or terrorists, as alleged. In response, the ANC leadership started to talk about negotiations, convened a conference in Harare to win approval for the Harare Declaration, which set out the path to a solution. At same time, Mandela opened negotiations with Afrikaner leaders (P.W. Botha, later F.W. de Klerk). The key negotiating points were simple: while there had to be majority rule, the fears and concerns of the (white) minority had to be addressed. These contacts built trust among the parties; when Mandela was released, he called F.W. “an honorable man.”

In the negotiation phase, the process was as important as the substance. Each side had to carry its constituencies along: De Klerk called the whites-only referendum to get a green light for negotiations; the ANC established the Patriotic Front, which Mandela used as a mandate to negotiate and which Mandela kept well informed. Secondly, the negotiations were all-inclusive – anything less would have lacked legitimacy. The Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) process, which brought together some 19 political groups in 1991 and 1992, was important for several reasons. It was: 1) Very transparent; 2) home-grown with no outside facilitators; 3) Open to public submissions.

Free elections were held in 1994; the new Parliament acted as a Constituent Assembly. A new Constitution was necessary; it became the country's supreme law, not changeable by Parliament as was the case earlier, with both an independent judiciary and an independent constitutional court. The new

Constitution also had strong rights and freedoms, especially for minorities (religious, linguistic, ethnic, etc.)

After the transition, to create a Government of national unity, provisions were made for the leader of the opposition to be the Vice President, and it was agreed that any party holding 5 percent of the votes got a Ministerial position in the Cabinet. Also established was the Truth & Reconciliation Commission, with the understanding that the former was necessary if one was to achieve the latter. This featured live broadcasts of its open testimony, with confrontation between perpetrators and victims/survivors. It was seen that reconciliation is a lengthy process that could not be built overnight. Since the transition, the SA Government has shared its experiences, with the Irish (who wouldn't even say good morning to each other before meetings began between opposing factions), the Israelis/Palestinians, Sri Lankans, Nepalese and Kosovars.

**Bába** said that a key question, in discussing Hungary's transition is simply "when did it start?" Known as "goulash communism," Kadar's Communist government was not a very repressive regime; it had no bloody hand: economic reforms had begun in 1968, and there were different reformists involved, for different reasons: ideologues, technocrats, intellectuals and others. A new election law was adopted in 1983, permitting two candidates (both pre-selected by the ruling party) for the same seat, plus the possibility of an independent third candidate nominated by a district – the first time since 1947 that elections were contested. Only one "third candidate" stood, in Szged, but 25% of the candidates chosen "to win" actually lost to the one expected "to lose." As a result, the Parliament had an unusual, unexpected composition, which became very important when it was called upon to change the Constitution in 1988-89.

Also, Institutes of the Academy of Sciences began exploring new paths. The Law Institute did the first studies of possible amendments to the constitution in 1983-84; they were not publicly disseminated, but at least the ideas were on the table for the first time. In addition, some civic organizations, including the Writer's Union, colleges of university students, youth groups, environmental groups, et al. did things on the edge of legality to challenge the ruling Party. Even the literary reviews became more socially oriented, permanently challenging the system, pointing out mistakes it had made, etc. (but without questioning the system itself). Meanwhile, the political opposition was active underground, issuing samizdat, and speaking about, among other things, 1956.

In May 1988, the Party Conference met. It was clear that the economic system was on the verge of collapse, which gave leverage to the radical reformers. Only one member of the Central Committee was reelected. Later that year, the CC decided to establish a committee to "revalidate the past 40 years" of Hungarian policies. Key among the issues it faced, of course, was what to say about the events of 1956. Finally, it was decided to refer to 1956 not as a counterrevolution but as a "People's Uprising." This meant the practical end of Kadarism.

Meanwhile, important events were underway in the USSR; Gorbachev took office and began to proclaim and implement perestroika and glasnost ("reconstruction" and "openness"). Earlier attempts at reform in Central Europe had failed because of hard-line Soviet pressure, but at this point it was unclear whether Gorbachev would succeed in his reforms or be crushed by the system -- that remained an open question until late 1989. Even though there were 100,000 Soviet troops stationed in Hungary, as an act of sovereign foreign policy, the Hungarian Government decided in mid-1989 to open the border to visitors from East to West. This was a direct challenge to the USSR and a test of Gorbachev. Only in December 1989 (after the Fall of The Berlin Wall) did people accept that things were really changing.

In June 1989, there was a "triangular" round table among the Party, opposition, and civic organizations. It reached agreement in September that there would be a constitutional state with a democratic framework, free elections, and a political system modeled on the FRG (West Germany). In September 1989, the last congress of the Socialist Worker's Party took place. In November 1989, a referendum decided to have the Parliament elect the President. In March/April 1990, the first free elections took place, leading to a democratically elected government in May 1990.

**Bába** noted several elements of an underlying consensus in the Hungarian transition:

- Bloodshed should be avoided.
- Don't Wake The Bear (don't confront communism directly, and thus provoke Moscow).
- There should be no limitations on Democracy
- There had to be continuity of the constitutional system, with Rule of Law as a basic element.



*Ivan Baba, ICDT, Hungary, discusses the Hungarian transition at a panel held in the Hungarian Parliament with Ebrahim Ebrahim, African National Congress, South Africa and Gediminas Serksnys, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Lithuania.*

**Köles** noted that in his mind, having listened to the presenters, four words stood out as common to all three transitions: **Transparency, Process, Inclusiveness, Civil Society.**

#### **Q & A:**

In response to questions from **Prof. Whitehead, Ebrahim** noted that international support for the struggle steadily built, even including pressure against the United States policy. There was a felt need for regional solutions to regional problems. This undermined the argument used by the South African Government that it was fighting communism. Zimbabwe is a sad case; there is no distinction between ZANU-PF and the Government (whereas in SA a distance was preserved between the ANC and the Government). This constitutes a check on the ruling party. But he noted, his government does not like megaphone diplomacy and rather has sought to exercise influence on Mugabe behind the scenes. Mugabe fears prosecution for Crimes against Humanity for his role in the Matabeleland struggle of the early 1980s when Zimbabwe's Fifth Brigade conducted brutal operations against members of the Ndebele minority and ZAPU supporters.

**Šerkšnys** said Lithuania was already a large country in the Middle Ages and had its own national identity, while other Balts didn't. Therefore it was stated that Independence would be based on a historical and deep seated sense of what the Lithuanian people wanted. The Soviet occupation was seen by Lithuanians as illegal, so there should be no "transition" period; it was felt that if the struggle for independence survived the first 1-2 weeks, it would succeed. In fact, the USSR was weaker than had been thought. In contrast, Be-

larus doesn't have such a strong sense of national identity as its creation always suffered from a somewhat artificial base. It had been a Slavic nation inside the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, where Slavs were a majority and Lithuanians a minority. It was not independent before the first World War, but was part of the Tsarist Empire. After 1945, it was heavily Sovietized.

**Bába** identified three aspects of the international situation which influenced developments in Hungary. First the neighborhood: Poland was different by virtue of its stronger networks. For example, Solidarity had 10 Million members. In contrast Hungary had no strong unions, yet Hungarians were in communication with their Polish counterparts. Second, in external affairs, the most important relations were, of course, with the USSR. Prior to transition the messages received from Western countries were ambiguous. When Hungarian leaders met with Schultz or Kissinger or Brzezinski, all they wanted to talk about was Gorbachev and the USSR, not Hungary. Third, the only major help came from George Soros, who gave millions of dollars for democracy through the Open Society Institute. President G.H.W. Bush's visit in 1989 was a strong symbol, but as was the stance of Chancellor Kohl and the French leaders, the U.S. position was ambiguous, emphasizing avoidance of bloodshed or provocation.

Noting democracy is described as "consolidated" when it is irreversible, **Amb. Cohen** asked the panelists whether they saw it as irreversible in their countries

**Bába** responded affirmatively noting that he sees Hungary is a consolidated democracy. Although there are still a lot of problems, as shown by the anti-government demonstrations in 2006, he stated that it is not at all likely that the fundamental system currently in place would change.

**Šerkšnys** said there are no internal forces currently impeding democracy in Lithuania. This was evidenced by the steps taken by Parliament, under the Constitution, to impeach the President. But, there did exist the possibility of an external threat, notably from Russia, that still could undermine democratic achievements. In fact, he observed that the President was impeached because he granted favors to a businessman with strong ties to Russia.

**Ebrahim** would like to think democracy is irreversible in South Africa, noting South Africans are now serving as advocates for democracy and good governance in the rest

of Africa. With South Africa's role in NEPAD, it was now part of the G-13 (up from the original grouping of major powers, the G-6). Although poverty, economic problems, and unemployment still have to be addressed, South Africa is endowed with a vibrant press and a strong civil society.

**Sparks** recalled that it's hard to make predictions, especially about the future. The ANC was "banned" in the 1960s, so their writings could not penetrate South African society, and the anti-ANC propaganda of the régime overwhelmed the peaceful message in white consciousness. In fact, it was rare that a ruling régime would abdicate, as this one did, through a process of negotiation. But *Apartheid* was always more than merely racial segregation – it was perceived as a key element in the struggle for national existence of the Afrikaner *volk*. There were, in effect, two ethnic groups laying claim to the same territory. The Afrikaners, who came in 1650, were led to believe by the Dutch Reformed Church that they had a divine right to the land, and their victory in battle (the Boer War) appeared to legitimize that claim. So *Apartheid* was an attempt at partition, to have a separate nation. Verwoerd proposed not a two-state solution, but a 10-state solution: South Africa and the Bantustans. So there was supposed to be a partition, but it was meant to be "fair." The problem was that you really couldn't unscramble the eggs that made up South African society. In all these transitions, you have to look for the crack that will begin the process. Verwoerd and those with a heritage in Holland understood the nature of dikes – one hole could be plugged, but several holes threatened the integrity of the whole structure.

Asked by **Mohsen Marzouk** about the importance of the Truth & Reconciliation Commission, Ebrahim noted that while there have been others, South Africa's was special: established by Parliamentary legislation, it was comprised of eminent people and led by Archbishop Tutu, had the power to subpoena people to testify, and it was wholly transparent (its proceedings were broadcast live every day while it was in session). Security service officials came forward and admitted what they had done. Perpetrators were brought face to face with victims or survivors. As Archbishop Tutu said, it is important to "forgive but never forget." Some people did not get amnesty, if they could not persuade the TRC that what they did was for political reasons – if it was simply a crime, like murder or theft – they had to face prosecution. And those who did not come forward are still liable for what they have done. **Sparks** concurred, saying it's like the question faced in Europe: what to do with the Communists, the KGB

agents, etc. In a lustration process, the information is not open to the public. If somebody admits his activities, they are protected; if they don't, they risk being exposed. In South Africa, it's all open.

**Ebrahim** closed by noting that the former ruling National Party has simply dissolved. One of its former leaders said, "I joined the ANC because if it fails, this country will collapse." Now he's a Vice Minister.

## Session 6: Case Studies of Transitions to Democracy in Eastern Europe

Panel: **Tamás Meszerics – Hungary**  
**István Hegedüs – Hungary**  
**Miroslav Kusy – Slovakia**  
**Gediminas Šerkšnys – Lithuania**  
**Iryna Chupryna – Ukraine**  
**Richard Rowson – The Role of Diplomatic Support  
in Ukraine**

**Meszerics** felt that the potential emergence of the EU as a more significant political and economic force, and the push toward the Single European Act, contributed to undermining the legitimacy of the regime in Hungary. An opportunity for transition emerged when Soviet leader Gorbachev appeared willing to cede ground in Central and Eastern Europe. In Poland, the prominence of Solidarity allowed it to negotiate a settlement with the previous regime; the lack of a unified opposition group in Hungary necessitated more free and open elections to form a transitional government.

**Hegedüs** noted that popular movements are often overlooked in Central and Eastern Europe, but the masses were also present in the transition, in addition to the negotiated settlements. Many different interpretations of transition continue to exist, making the drawing of lessons difficult. Different theories include top-down transition led by "reform communists"; the technocratic view that economic experts prepared economic reform packages that led to wider transition; the role of "underground opposition", including intellectuals and writers; and the "Spanish model" of cooperation between moderates in the opposition and reformists within the government. An important issue is what to do with the leaders of the previous régime after a transition has occurred.

In Hungary, most supported the right of even hard-line communists to participate in future governments, which contributed to a greater sense of reconciliation.

**Kusy** said that after the Prague Spring of 1968, Communist rule in Czechoslovakia became the most severe of any Soviet satellite state. Many former Communists, who were expelled from the party after '68, became the first promoters of change in the country, so in the Czechoslovak case the leaders of reform were political, not members of the intelligentsia. The Charter 77 signatories were well-known dissenters. Specifically in Slovakia, religious freedom was a major factor in the reform, and the leaders of reform were not politically-oriented; reform began as a civic movement without political ambitions, but it became the only legitimate political opposition. One difference between the Czech Republic and Slovakia was the approach to lustration as the exclusion of former Communist officials was the official policy for all of Czechoslovakia, but, in fact, not carried out in the Slovak portion of the country.

**Bába** added that it is clear that there was no single blueprint for transition in Central and Eastern Europe.

**Šerkšnys** noted that beginning in the 19th century, Lithuania regularly resisted Russian rule, and in the 20th century, active military resistance continued until 1953. The formation of many resistance groups began in the 60s and 70s, but there was no major leading reform group until the formation of Sajudis in 1988. In 1989, the Sajudis passed a declaration vowing to reestablish independence through peaceful means. Following the restoration of independence, Lithuania faced several significant challenges, including the creation/restoration of all state institutions; the formation of a new constitution emphasizing the rule of law, democracy, and human rights; and the development of a vibrant civil society.

**Chupryna** described Ukraine in academic terminology as an example of an Electoral Revolution, in which a fraudulent election serves as the trigger for popular movements; elections can provide an opportunity for civil society to organize in advance and draw the attention of the international community. In Ukraine, the popular movements were supported by the West: seven Embassies funded exit polling and other electoral monitoring. The United States publicly rejected the 21 November 2004 election results, which is a key difference between the successful movement in Ukraine and the failed movement in Azerbaijan a year later.



*Miroslav Kusy, Comenius University, Slovakia; Dick Rowson, CCD, USA; Allister Sparks, author, South Africa; Steve Wagenseil, CCD, USA – participate in the panel on transitions to democracy in Central/East Europe.*

Freedom of assembly, some independent media including independent television, and a moderately strong Parliament allowed breathing space for civil society in Ukraine. At the time of the Orange Revolution, there were about 40,000 NGOs in the country, including 4,000 active NGOs. Furthermore, when a regime such as Ukraine is substantially different from its neighbors, it becomes difficult to maintain that regime, especially when democratic countries such as Poland and Lithuania were actively involved in mediating post-election negotiations.

Collaborative networks of democratic activists from other successful movements in the region – OTPOR (“Resistance!”) in Yugoslavia, its offshoot Kmara in Georgia, and the Civic Campaign OK-98 in Slovakia – provided guidance and support for Ukrainian activists. The PORA (“It’s Time!”) youth movement included an estimated 35,000 participants and was essential in the success of the Orange Revolution.

(See **Annex A** for accompanying slide presentation.)

**Rowson** noted that strong diplomatic and intergovernmental support for democratic forces in Ukraine supplemented the interests that already existed in the country. Ukraine’s participation in the OSCE and the Council of Europe provided legitimacy to efforts by the West to support democracy as an enabler of greater integration into Europe and the West. External support was open and transparent, and support was for the overall democratic process, not a particular candidate. Diplomats also took steps to discourage military or police actions against the peaceful protests in Ukraine. This panoply of activity is being described in a “Diplomats’ Handbook” being prepared by CCD for presentation to the Bamako CD Ministerial as a tool which can and should be used to enable Embassy personnel to respond to requests from civil society for assistance in fostering a peaceful transition to democracy.

In the **discussion** that followed, **Shahin** noted that in the Arab world, there is no unified opposition in place to challenge the ruling establishment. **Pastor** remarked on how comparatively “easy” the transition from communism was compared to efforts to democratize elsewhere, and **Jarrah** asked if there was a role for religious actors in the CEE transitions.

**Whitehead** noted academic arguments that the C/EE cases contain unique factors that limit the transferability of lessons to other transitions, but said that these case studies seem to dispute this.

**Wagenseil** highlighted other issues to be considered, including the roles of domestic and international election observers and especially of parliamentarians in the monitoring process, since four Western Parliamentary bodies (from OSCE, the Council of Europe, NATO and the European Union) were officially represented in observing the Ukrainian elections. In addition, the diaspora played a large role, as there were significant numbers of Ukrainian-Americans and Ukrainian-Canadians that acted in support of the Orange Revolution, as observers and in other ways.

**Meszerics** stated it is now widely held that elections are a necessary source of legitimacy, so they will provide opportunities to trigger a democratic transition in cases of competitive authoritarianism. **Bába** reminded everyone that a unified opposition usually will split according to their own interests after the common goal of free elections is achieved, adding that in such instances the voices of the West remain very important to the process of democratic transition.

**Šerkšnys** emphasized that successful democratic movements must have the support of the masses; transparency in these movements is also essential to their success.

## Session 7: Overview of Transitions to Democracy in Africa

Chair: **Herman Cohen**  
Panelists: **Bob LaGamma, Paul Graham, and  
Kent Obee**

**Ambassador Cohen** opened the discussion with a general analysis of the evolution (or non-evolution) of democracy in Africa from the end of the colonial era to the present. He

noted that in Central/East Europe the end of Soviet authoritarianism was marked by an almost universal flowering of democracy in the region. However, in Africa the end of colonialism was followed by an equally universal wave of one-party authoritarian states. Common features included one-man rule, suppression of civil liberties, domestic spying, and state control of the media.

Following the economic decline of most African countries in the 1970s, there have been some more positive trends on the continent. World Bank pressures, greater economic pragmatism, more media freedom, more open societies, practical experience with elections and the rise of opposition parties have all contributed to a limited flowering of democracy in the region, with a few African states now moving into the democratic or near-democratic column.

In general, however, the African experience is not a happy one. More transitions have failed than have succeeded. There is still a strong propensity toward one-party states and strong-man rule on the continent. Successes in countries such as South Africa, Mauritius, Ghana and Mali are sadly countered by the existence of some of the most totalitarian regimes in the world – e.g., Eritrea, Burkina Faso and Rwanda – on the same continent.

**LaGamma** discussed some of the factors that contributed to the rise of authoritarianism in Africa. After the initial euphoria of gaining freedom from colonial rule, most African states faced truly daunting challenges, including Cold War divisions and interventions in African affairs; the impact of radical ideology; non-alignment; the lack of practical economic experience; continued economic and political intervention by former colonial powers; and the problems of linguistic and tribal fragmentation of almost every country on the continent. These problems were compounded by the Organization of African Unity's own unwillingness to condemn changes in government by assassination and coup.

Still, by the late 1980s some bright spots began to appear. Cold War pressures disappeared and Africans gained more experience in governance. A more robust and freer media in many African countries has helped end the government's monopoly on information and public discourse. Outside organizations, such as the NDI and NED, and targeted pro-democracy development aid by Western embassies, have also contributed. By 1988 the NDI catalog of democracies on the continent included Senegal, Mauritius, Cape Verde and Botswana. Since then there has been further positive



*Emad Shahin, Egypt; Cesar Beltran, Hungary; Laurence Whitehead, Oxford University, UK; Hoda Chalak, Lebanon, participate in day two of the conference.*

evolution with the addition of South Africa, Benin, Ghana and Mali to the list. Given their size, the keystones to still further democratic evolution on the continent remain Nigeria (where there is considerable potential) and the Congo (where there is much less).

**Graham** began his presentation by reminding conference participants of the vastness of Africa – a continent of 53 states spanning thousands of miles and encompassing incredible diversity. Thus, it is hard to generalize when speaking about democratic transitions in Africa. Still, there are some common themes. He noted four: (1) the impact of elections, (2) the development of civil society and political rights, (3) the nature of the transitions themselves (to be covered in a later session), and (4) the need to move forward rather than backwards in democratic evolution.

On the electoral experience itself, Mr. Graham suggested that the mere fact the vast majority of African states have held elections (whether good, bad, or indifferent) can have a positive effect. Leaders and publics alike learn a democratic vocabulary, experience is gained in the mechanics of elections and election monitoring has become part of the process in some countries. Elections, even flawed ones, can help create a culture of democracy in a “neighborhood” and help foster a democratic dividend – and even a demand for more democracy.

Likewise the development of civic and political institutions in post-colonial Africa has improved the odds for democracy. Competing institutions, stronger constitutions, and greater adherence to the rule of law all help make the state more impartial and create the environment for sustaining democratic transitions. **Graham** concluded by noting the continuing

need in Africa to move forward, not backward, in its democratic transitions and cited Zimbabwe as an example of how to really mess up a country.

**Obee** spoke anecdotally and discussed his experience in Tanzania and South Africa. Tanzania, where he served from 1977 to 1981, was a good example of an African state which moved almost seamlessly from independence into one-party/one-man rule. Under Julius Nyerere this rule was relatively benign, but with it came an enforced utopian socialist system that was an economic disaster for the country. His South African experience was a far more heartening story. He arrived in the country in August of 1989 on the day hard-line President P. W. Botha resigned and for the next three years was privileged to be a witness to South Africa’s transition to majority rule.

Noting that South Africa’s own story would be eloquently told by the conference’s South African participants, he focused on the role played by third parties and more specifically the American Embassy in assisting the transition. While stressing that primary credit went to the South Africans themselves, he said he strongly believed the facilitative role played by the Embassy and American diplomats had been helpful in facilitating dialogue in a society badly split by Apartheid. He noted in particular the impact of exchange visits sponsored by the Embassy, which involved both taking South Africans of all races to the United States to observe firsthand the workings of a diverse multiracial society and, later, the bringing of American experts to South Africa to work with participants on both sides in the creation of a new democratic framework for South Africa. A particularly telling example of the former was an invitation to visit the U.S. to a young deputy minister of agriculture named F. W. de Klerk, who later said his American experience provided his first realization that a multiracial society could be workable.

During a **discussion** following the presentation it was agreed that the role of the African Union today is more positive today than was OAU in the past. Mediation and networking are also important. Participants felt there are some major differences in the levels of civil society in Africa and the Middle East, but also some relevant similarities. Both experience extreme poverty but the excessive wealth, which exists from oil economies in the Middle East is also an inhibitor to democratic development, as it props up undemocratic regimes. There also was a belief that U. S. support for democracy in the Middle East is not as strong as it is in Africa.

## Session 8: Case Studies: Transitions to Democracy in Ghana and South Africa

Panelists: **Audrey Gadzekpo, Allister Sparks,  
Paul Graham, and Ebrahim Ebrahim**

Concentrating on her homeland, **Gadzekpo** noted Ghana has just celebrated its 50th anniversary, and the country as a whole is trying to be introspective, to analyze what worked and what did not over the past five decades. The last military regime lasted 11 years, but in the end it was only temporary. In 1988, there began a long, long march towards a referendum. There was pressure from donors, pressure from the Ghanaian diaspora. It was clear in the late 80s and early 90s that the winds of democracy were blowing. After all, Benin became a democracy in 1989, so Ghanaians felt they had to catch up.

The transition was flawed, as the military régime handed over power – but only to a civilianized version of itself, thereby protecting its power. There were elections in 1992, for President and Parliament, but the opposition was so upset with the distortions of the Presidential elections that it decided to boycott the Parliamentary elections. This created a one-party parliament, with the same people in power -- clearly a failed transition.

But civil society did open up and the print media were liberated. In 1996, the airwaves were liberated as the broadcast media changed. This led to greater scrutiny of the Government. In addition, a Commission on Human Rights and Administration of Justice was created, and the Elections Commission and judiciary were strengthened. Political parties started to grow and mature, as did Parliament, somewhat, but to this day it remains weaker than it should be.

In addition, there were some political reforms, the independence of the National Electoral Commission was increased, and eventually in 2000 there was a genuine transference of power. This was followed by another successful election in 2004. The Commission on Human Rights and Administration of Justice has investigated some civil servants, and the Elections Commission is a strong member of the network of government agencies. Progress has been made in a non-retributive way, like the TRC in South Africa. There were recommendations calling for reforms, and Ghana is a strong

supporter of the African Peer Review Mechanism within the AU, under NEPAD.

This shows a welcome willingness of the Government to subject itself to public scrutiny, and there have been improvements in responsiveness and accountability. However, there are still defects: corruption remains intractable and is generally seen as a retardant factor in democratic progress. In addition, there are deficits in the development of political parties, as well as in the internal democracy of the parties and their accountability to their members and to the wider society. Finally, Parliament is not yet as effective as it ought to be, as the economic disparity between the income of Ministers and that of MPs leads some MPs to withhold their criticism in hopes of being invited into the government.

There are still threats on the economic front, as well. There is a serious need for public sector reform; there is high youth unemployment; there are shortages of water, electricity and health services; and poverty levels remain high across the country. But Ghana recently floated a sovereign bond, meaning it can raise money in the financial markets without having to resort to donor funding; turnout for elections remains high, showing continued citizen confidence. Term limits have been imposed and there's little fear they will be reversed, and civil-military relations have improved. NGOs have been active in this sphere, and the military seems reluctant to get back into politics. In particular, it's worth noting that JJ Rawlings lost the vote in the barracks, meaning he didn't have the support of the soldiers – a major signal. In addition, the incumbent President is not eligible for reelection. All these are positive signs of the transition in Ghana.

**Sparks** noted that revolutions are seldom followed by instant democracy. Democracy has to make its own, organic growth, compatible with the society and culture from which it emanated. One must allow the people to find their own way, not impose democracy by “shock and awe.” In Zambia, the President was voted out, and similar things have happened in Malawi and Mauritius. Africa is no longer The Hopeless Continent. But it is not a European continent, either. Still, there are lessons to be gleaned, even though its experience differs from that in Central/East Europe.

In South Africa, it was both a binational and a transitional conflict. That struggle was binational, because it was between two ethnic groups each fighting for the same homeland (as in Northern Ireland, Cyprus, Sri Lanka, or the Israeli-Palestinian struggle); and transitional because it



*Allister Sparks, author, South Africa, speaks on the South African transition to democracy, with Paul Graham, IDASA, South Africa and Bob LaGamma, CCD, USA.*

represented a change from one type of régime to another. Resolving Hungary's problems was a matter for Hungarians alone, as we have heard. Reuniting the FRG and the GDR was a matter of one language, one historical culture, but it was still hard. In South Africa, we have 11 official languages – it's a huge challenge.

South Africa is a laboratory demonstrating why the entire world must become tolerant of diversity. But can its experience be transferred to others? Perhaps some elements can such as: The situation must reach a point where the ruling elite begins to have self doubts and loses credibility with its support base; and is confronted by an opposition. In South Africa, there was an unstable equilibrium: a deadlock wherein the opposition could not oust the régime and the régime could not defeat the opposition. If one side thinks it can prevail, the struggle continues. If it's stuck, things have to give way. (The Israeli-Palestinian conflict, although it is in a deadlock, is kept frozen by the unwavering, unconditional support of the United States Government for Israel.) Only when the two sides start to talk about their security can progress be made.

But the principal figures have to come to the table – you cannot deal through intermediaries or underlings. That was the importance of Mandela's participation – he could simply call a stop if he felt it wasn't working. The Israelis (and the Palestinians) keep looking for a “moderate interlocutor” but that's the wrong approach. The opposition with which you are dealing must be as broadly-based as possible, not just a moderate slice of opinion, omitting the extreme views.

**Graham** felt we need to consider the timeframe, the initial conditions, and the unfolding process. It's hard to separate contemporary analysis and retrospective myth-making, but we need to look back at what we were doing at the time. Did we know we were in a transition, or were we just seek-

ing a temporary advantage in a bargaining process? Or were we just fortunate to be able to take advantage of circumstances as they arose? In fact, from the late 1980s we knew that it could not continue the way it had been going, but nobody knew how it would unfold. The Harare Declaration of August 1989 by the OAU's Ad-Hoc Committee on Southern Africa, setting out principles and modalities for any negotiations, helped precipitate this.

As for timing, there were a series of discussions. From 1990, the authorities started to implement a series of ANC demands -- unbanning persons, releasing political prisoners, return of exiles, etc. -- and there were negotiations on the constitutional changes that would be necessary, but they did not run at all smoothly. CODESA was a marvelous beast, but it actually failed to achieve its stated purpose, which was to bring about a peaceful transition. And the armed struggle did continue during those talks, on both sides. In fact, some members of the right wing actually drove an armored truck through the glass doors of the negotiation venue, to show their opposition to the talks. And writing the text of a new Constitution is easy, compared to gaining acceptance, legally and otherwise, for it. It became necessary at the last minute to develop a Transition Council that would implement the change-over.

There was always the potential for disinvestment in the process, if persons became disenchanted. This pushed the hard issues down the road, as people dealt with the easy ones first in a form of confidence-building. For example, the move to transition on local government issues was very slow, as the parties had to merge their constituencies (which had never worked together before). It was easier for the ANC, which knew what it wanted, while the white side was left to its own fears because there were no clear guarantees what they would get out of the process. Some of them reportedly prepared for Doomsday, stocked the basement with supplies, including enough tuna for four months, while at the same time religious groups tried to reassure their communities. Groups to the right of those in the talks, both white extremists and blacks in the Inkhata Freedom Party, were most reluctant to accept the changes. But the message was “it's never too late to include you, if you want to join.”

Finally, there was agreement on 33 of the constitutional principles, as well as the interim constitution to cover the elections, and a final Constitution negotiated by the elected Representatives (which was signed in 1996). Managing the elections was a challenge. The Election Commission had



only been formed 4 months earlier, and it had to work with civil society to prepare the elections, conduct voter education, and train political parties in their roles.

One difficult question which arose during the negotiations was “What to do with the Police?” It was agreed there was need for a Community Police Force but the security police had handled crime intelligence, and when they were disbanded that knowledge and skills base was lost. To help address that problem, it was decided that “there shall be amnesty,” and the TRC led the process, organized by civil society and approved by the Ministry of Justice.

In fact, the transition in South Africa was “the world’s transition,” since the whole world had been involved in the negotiations in one way or another. This international involvement helped the participants think creatively and provided resources when things needed to be done.

**Ebrahim** stressed that *Apartheid* was beginning to fail by the time the Bantustans were created. The Government also tried to establish a strange tri-cameral system with White, Coloured and Indian Parliaments. The ANC called for a boycott of those elections, and this led in turn to the United Democratic Front. There was violence during the negotiations, and suspicion fell on the Inkhata Freedom Party as the one responsible. Mandela called for a halt to the negotiations, to put pressure on the participants, but in fact the talks continued, discreetly. The ANC decided to disband its armed wing (Mkonto we Siswe) but the ANC was careful to ensure it could continue the process every day.

Just as India gave its moral leadership to the world during creation of the Non-Aligned Movement, now South Africa fills that role. Only Canada and the USA don’t trust it and keep it at arm’s length. We are welcomed because we bring a message of peace.

During the discussion period, **Cohen** asked if the ANC is moving towards a one-party state? **Graham** replied that while the ANC is dominant, you cannot blame the voters. The future does not rest in ANC hands, since there are leadership challenges within the Government and within the ANC. On the other hand, there was a court case recently in which the Rugby Union issued a subpoena for Former President Mandela, and he appeared. That’s a pretty good sign that the Government does see itself as subject to the Rule of Law.

**Whitehead** noted it is tempting to forget the mixed experiences of others, which did not go well, in the process of applying them to other situations. **Sparks** pointed out that liberation of the broadcast media was another example of a complex but separate and parallel negotiation. Six or eight lawyers, plus the Chief Justice, were trying to find a model for a board to supervise the South African Broadcasting Corporation. Some 600 people were nominated, that number was whittled down to about 18, but President F.W. de Klerk vetoed six of them. In the end, the changes were implemented and now there is a lively variety of broadcast outlets.

## Session 9: Some Lessons from Latin America

Chair: **Dick Rowson**  
Panelist: **Robert Pastor**

**Pastor** outlined Latin America’s democratic evolution, to set the stage for a possible comparison of this experience with the situation in the Middle East. He noted that in the past fifty years Latin America and the Caribbean had moved from being almost entirely authoritarian to now almost entirely democratic – the sole exception being Cuba. While the transition had been uneven with several waves of progress followed by equally sharp periods of setback, today the pendulum has swung decisively in the direction of democracy in the region.

**Pastor** summarized thirteen obstacles faced by Latin American countries in moving from authoritarian rule to democracy and how they were overcome. Four of these were **cultural**. First was the authoritarian nature of Latin American Catholicism which was overcome by the development of Christian democratic parties which became strong advocates of democracy. Next was exclusion of indigenous populations from the political process and here the answer was simply inclusion – a process in which countries with large indigenous populations actually led the way. Regional political norms that supported a mystique of revolution and non-intervention (and concomitant authoritarian rule) were countered by regional agreements in Santiago in 1991 and strengthened in Lima in 2001 to collectively support democracy. Finally, the idea that underdevelopment was an underpinning for dictatorship was gainsaid by the practical realization that dictators were no better than democrats at managing economic development – and may even have been worse.

**Institutional and procedural obstacles** to democracy in the region included the Caudillo (strong man) tradition, the roles of the military and the church, a history of single dominant party rule, electoral fraud and public acquiescence to all of the above. In each case, countries in the region have found solutions. Individual constitutional reforms (Mexico) and regional agreements (Punto Fijo) have reigned in the caudillos and the generals. The church itself democratized with the development of Christian democratic parties and liberation theology. Single parties were eroded by splits and defections which have resulted in the forming of genuine opposition parties. Finally, throughout the region there has been significant growth of civil society and related institutions – particularly the media – all of which have facilitated democratic evolution.

**Pastor** concluded with an examination of three **international factors** which started as obstacles and in the end became parts of the democratic solution. First was the influence – and examples – of the former colonial powers, Spain and Portugal, which made their own transitions from dictatorship to democracy. Likewise, the regional swing of the pendulum toward democracy shifted the balance of collective pressure in the same direction. As in other parts of the world, the end of the Cold War simplified regional equations and left the U. S. with no excuse for supporting an authoritarian regime just because it was on “our side.”

In sum, the lesson from Latin America is that significant obstacles to democracy can be overcome, old patterns can be changed, outside influences can help and democracy itself can lift people up. Democracy may seem impossible, but it is always possible.

In the subsequent **discussion**, participants discussed the relevance of the Latin American example to the Middle East, concluding there are some distinct regional differences but also some very real parallels. The role of diasporas in both regions was seen to be both positive and negative. The possibility of another swing of the pendulum in Latin America was judged not likely, although nothing is guaranteed. Participants also noted some Latin American parallels to the problem of ruling monarchs in the Middle East.

## Session 10:

# Attitudes towards Democracy in the Middle East and North Africa

Presenter: **Ahmed Younis, Gallup Organization**

**Younis** noted that the “Muslim World” is not the same as the Middle East – less than 20% of the Muslims in the world are Arabs. Data and survey results dispute what has become the conventional wisdom that Islam and Democracy are incompatible.

Muslims express admiration for the freedoms of speech, religion, and assembly in the West, while the West expresses admiration for the level of religious commitment of Muslims. Muslims view religion as an opportunity for advancement of democracy, progress, and a key to improved relations with the West. Only 7.5% of Muslims polled expressed views that qualified them as “politically radical,” and the data found that political moderates and political radicals do not differ significantly in levels of religiosity. When asked about terrorism, Islamic values are the most common source of people’s rejection of terrorism.

Nine Percent of Turks polled believe that that Sharia law should be the sole source of law in Turkey, which is equal to the percentage of Americans who believe the Bible should be the sole source of law in the United States. Muslims and Americans agree on the need to control extremism. Muslims see conflict with the West as issues related to policy and respect, not as issues of religion; anti-American sentiment is not driven by cultural or religious differences, but is instead driven by a belief that the United States will not allow Mus-



*Ahmed Younis from the Gallup Poll presents attitudes toward democracy in the Muslim world.*

lims to shape their own political future. Political radicals actually see more hope in the potential of democracy in their countries; most Muslims do not believe that the United States is serious about the establishment of democracy in other countries.

Conclusions:

- Disagreements between Muslims and the West are based in policy differences, not in cultural or religious differences.
- To support the development of democracy in the Muslim world, democracy must not be treated as a rigid set of rules, but rather as a guiding principle that can be adapted to suit the needs of societies.
- Religious moderation should be defined by religious attitudes, not by an acceptance or rejection of specific policies.

(See **Annex B** for the slides used in this Presentation)

## **Session 11: Democratic Aspirations and Institutional Foundations for Democracy in Eastern Europe, South Africa and Ghana before Transition**

Panelists: **Paul Graham, Audrey Gadzekpo, and David Kilgour**

**Graham** opened his presentation by asking how a country develops the momentum for a democratic transition. How does it develop a democratic narrative, a democratic trajectory? In South Africa in the 1970s and 80s the democratic narrative included the exile story, the prison story, the underground and the mass democratic movement (MDM). The MDM proved to be very broad and very effective – drawing in many people and institutions in support of a change in the political order. **Graham** stressed the importance of organizing to create a larger voice connecting individual institutions with the larger movement. By the 1980s this had begun to happen and the result was the evolution of the United Democratic Front (UDF), which encompassed a broad cross section of South African society – churches, legal associations,

unions and universities. The UDF helped people learn to organize themselves, which in turn made the movement rich in leadership. In sum, in the South African case, resources had to be found within existing organizations in order to develop a national resistance.

External pressures also played an important part in the pre-transition period in South Africa. The turning point came with the end of the Cold War when the white government could no longer play on Western fears of the East and the outside world developed a single approach to the regime. Imposition of economic, sporting and cultural sanctions left the country financially and psychologically isolated. At this point Mandela wrote his “olive branch letter” with the invitation to open negotiations. This triggered the start of the true transition.

**Gadzekpo** continued with a presentation on the Ghanaian pre-transitional experience. By the late 1980s, the “Children of the Revolution” had become disillusioned with the state of affairs in the country. Students were restive, underground political parties were beginning to form, pressure was developing from within the military government, and the public “culture of silence” was beginning to crumble. The government responded with managed local elections. These were flawed and imperfect, but still important as demonstrations of the democratic process. Next a new constitution was drafted. This too was flawed – a hybrid of the U. S. and Westminster models, which also included “transitional provisions” including indemnity for incumbents. At the same time, it included checks and balances and was seen as a step in the right direction.

Two further developments aided the Ghanaian pre-transition. The first was the reconstituting and strengthening of a badly weakened judiciary – a process in which bar associations played an important role. The second was the revival of the news media as a free and independent player in the country’s political discourse.

**Kilgour** concluded the session with comments on the situation in Romania, drawing on a paper he had co-authored with Lidia Melinte on the “Proclamation of Timisoara and Building an Open Society in Post-totalitarian Romania.” **Kilgour** noted that the Romanian transition was far bloodier than was the case in the rest of Central and Eastern Europe – 1,100 killed in Romania compared with only a single Czech death. Romania was very much a “fear-based” society and its

democratic transition has been rocky. In 1989 the Timisoara Society had issued a proclamation with a program for changing communist Romania into a democratic society. Unfortunately most of the ideals and objectives outlined in the Timisoara document were sidelined, as the transition in the country was hijacked by former communists.

**Kilgour** concluded with a listing of some of the steps Romania must yet take to become fully democratic. These include the acceptance of diversity, an authentic renewal of democratic values, educational programs to develop civic spirit, a free and fair electoral process, control of the influence of the former security apparatus, establishment of an independent judiciary, and the development of a free and independent media.

## Session 12

# The Relevance of the Central/East European and African Experiences to the MENA Region and The Ingredients Necessary to Achieve Transition

Panelists: **Mohsen Marzouk, Hoda Chalak, Nasser Amin, Amr Hamzawy, Reza Eslami-Somea, and Emad Shahin**

**Chalak** highlighted the Lebanese experience and its shaky democratic experiment built upon its diverse religious composition, its civil war and the foreign interests that have done battle in the country. She spoke of the violence that has been responsible for the killing of leaders including a former Prime Minister, and of the Cedar Revolution that ensued, leading to the withdrawal of the Syrian army. A major issue in Lebanon is confessional identity, the division of the country among some 19 religious groups. In addition, a new election law is badly needed.

There is a problem of democratic transition in the face of violence. An international tribunal has been proposed and accepted by the UN to find the truth about assassinations of leaders. Despite these serious problems **Chalak** contends that Lebanon is the most interesting case in the Middle East because of its vibrant civil society, its free media, the independ-

ence of its judiciary and the character of its national political parties. It is a unique example of pluralism but the democratic experiment is at risk and if it fails there will be repercussions throughout the region. The test will be the approaching presidential election and the international community will closely follow the results.

**Amin** surveyed the region from the perspective of rule of law. He described Egypt as a highly complex reality, one central to its region. He identified many problems including human rights violations, limits on free speech and labor organizations, and civilian issues handled by military courts, but he also cited judicial independence as the bedrock from which rights will eventually flow. He noted the recent attempt by judges to permit the opposition to win more seats in parliament. The judiciary, he said, is the catalyst by which individuals can hope to attain their rights.

He observed that serious crimes have been committed throughout the region by Arab regimes and by Israel, including crimes against humanity and war crimes, and therefore it was imperative that the Rome Treaty on the International Criminal Court (ICC) be ratified. He attributed the opposition of the U.S. and its efforts to persuade others to oppose to the Treaty to the desire to protect its military personnel. He concluded that without a change of U.S. policy on this issue no progress toward democratization in the region is likely.

**Somea** outlined the issues preventing progress in Iran. He judged the Iranian Constitution as a barrier to a democratic system because it fails to recognize non-discrimination or to enshrine the rule of law. He maintained that religious institutions constitute a barrier to democracy. He observed that the Iranian elite is not accountable to the people and that opportunities for progress were missed during the presidency of Mohammad Khatami. **Somea** charged that elections have not been fair and the media is not free. There are controls on civil society and activists, and university professors have been arrested for even teaching about the “colored elections” of East and Central Europe. He argued that the election of President Ahmadinejad has made things worse but that nonetheless the situation in Iran is not as bad as it is portrayed in the Western media whose coverage seems to provoke war.

On the positive side he characterized Iranians as interested in democracy and on claiming their fundamental rights. He said activists are non-violent and extremist approaches to change

not welcome. Web blogs and Internet usage is very high. He observed that religious discussion including attempts to modernize religious doctrine is widespread and unique in the Muslim world with scholars attempting to interpret the Koran in ways that keep pace with contemporary needs. He suggested that there exists an opportunity to collaborate with some religious leaders who are connected to the people in order to convince Iranians that change is not incompatible with religion.

Currently, academics have a hard time obtaining visas and **Somea** predicts there will not be much progress over the next two years. He says Iranians do not trust that the West in its efforts to encourage democracy. He described as counter-productive the \$75 million the Bush Administration has proposed to promote democracy in Iran. Furthermore, the discussion of a possible military attack on Iran undermines democratic progress.

**Shahin** suggests that the Middle East is underrepresented in the study of transitions. He recommends seven issues should be taken into consideration by those looking at prospects for transition in the region. They are:

1. It is useful to understand the resilience of autocratic regimes in Latin America but also to understand how change was negotiated with such regimes.
2. It is important to understand that the state controls the single party, the security services, and the bureaucracy.
3. Civil society is divided and fragmented.
4. Economic restructuring in the Middle East is not accompanied by political liberalization and oil production has a negative impact because of resource control by the régime.
5. The transition process itself is three or four decades old. There are many individuals that have had parliamentary experience, but the path to change in the region is unclear and it is subject to reversals.
6. The security situation complicates the picture. External factors intrude and often security interests do not coincide with democratization.
7. Finally, are we willing to accept a democratic order based on religion?



*Reza Somea, Iran; Amr Hamzawy, Egypt; Mohsen Marzouk, Tunisia (Chair), Hoda Chalak, Lebanon; Nasser Amin, Egypt, identify the relevance of African and Central/East European case studies to democratic transitions in the MENA region.*

For there to be real change **Shahin** suggests certain requisites need to be present:

1. Internal pressures, including economic decline and other forces of duress.
2. There must be agreement on objectives. Will the West be willing to risk the collapse of Egypt?
3. In cases such as Hungary, Ukraine or South Africa there were external “triggers” that allowed free and fair elections.
4. The incumbent regime must have a willingness to negotiate. In some cases it is more likely to be willing to sacrifice its own people by the millions.
5. In the European cases there was the incentive that comes with joining the European Union. The Middle East has no comparable incentive.
6. There needs to be a mechanism to move from autocracy to democracy

**Hamzawy** asked what is missing in the Arab world and why is there no one coming to the negotiating table? He answers that there are powerful establishments and elites, and an oil curse, which provides an authoritarian dividend. He asked “why are we not coming close?” He maintained that there are five reasons:

1. The liberal and leftist opposition parties lack significant constituencies, have stagnant structures, and aging memberships; there is also a disdain for local politics and a dependence on ruling elites to secure political space as well as corruption which discredits opposition parties.

2. There are curbs on NGOs -- there is no similarity to the effective civil society that existed in Ghana or South Africa. There is an urban bias in politics, a concentration on cities; since 2005 there has been an attempt to attract youth and introduce more dynamic tactics.
3. The Islamist movement enjoys a strong constituency, is well organized, commands support, and embraces local politics, but it generates fear among elites and lacks clarity about democratic norms and ideals. It has not come to grips with the role of religion in politics and is unable to deal with rights of non-Muslims (e.g. the Copts in Egypt), but it has made some progress on women's issues.
4. Protest movements in Egypt, Yemen and Jordan consist of activist networks, which have changed the Arab street with, for example, demonstrations against Mubarak.
5. Cracks within the establishments come from groups like judges in Egypt and parliamentarians in Kuwait.

He set forth four other problems: (1) There are ideological divides which make it easier to divide and rule, (2) There a lack of strategic vision and clarity on tactics; (3) There is a lack of organization and creativity; and (4) There has been little use of the potential offered by use of the Internet.

**Sparks** suggested that movements for change go through cycles of fever and decline. He expressed the hope that Islamic movements could evolve or become more moderate and suggested Hamas as an example. **Obee** recalled that Amin blamed U.S. policy for lack of progress and asked if U.S. policy was not used as an excuse. **Kilgour** asked what democrats abroad can do to help.

**Pastor** characterized the panelists as having superbly defined the obstacles to transition. He said he thought a country-by-country approach was necessary and noted some progress was being made. Calling the Islamist debate critical, **Pastor** suggested that the West does not know how to enter the debate, but that each country offers special opportunities for doing so.

**Graham** declared that by identifying obstacles we can find ways of operating and suggested that South African Muslim leaders might be helpful. **Churpryna** stressed the need to engage youth to transcend problems and proposed that Europe was best able to play the role of lead external actor. **Jarrah** also urged the engagement of external actors such as MEPI and Soros. **LaGamma** suggested that the conference

host, ICDT, could usefully play a role. **Cohen** suggested an exploration of how institutions get funded. **Rowson** suggested that the proposed Diplomat's Handbook could also be used to assist this process. **LaGamma** recalled the incentives that were important to other transitions and asked what the incentives were for countries of the MENA region?

**Shahin** called on the West to stop funding autocrats and do simple concrete things to help, such as insisting on independent electoral commissions and training for electoral officials. He declared that the main incentive is freedom, but that autocrats argue that democracy will bring chaos, as it is seen to have done in Iraq and Afghanistan. He noted that efforts on the part of the Arab world to reach partnership agreements with the European Union have failed. **Somea** asserted that a democratic strategy is needed as well as sound moral and cultural support. He said we don't need money; in fact external money hurts the cause. But he agreed it was necessary to stop funding autocrats and that educational and cultural exchange should be stepped up.

**Hamzawy** described the Islamist movements as ideological but also present on the ground. They are comparable to what the Christian Democrats once were elsewhere, but change for them takes time and when allowed to participate in the political process they have evolved. He argued that a space must be created for them to accept the concept of pluralism, and he identified elections as key to change requiring monitoring, electoral commissions and laws. He added that restrictions on NGOs and parties had to be lifted and judges and parliamentarians empowered, especially in selected countries.

**Hamzawy** charged that the U.S. has not resolved the issue of trade-offs between security and democracy in the region and that the West is seen as hypocritical as a consequence.

**Chalak** expressed her view that stability and peace were important but justice should be the primary objective, understanding it is a long term process and therefore we must continue a sustained dialogue on these issues. **Marzouk** recommended the creation of a strategic group from this Conference to carry forward the process of transition to democracy in the MENA area – Shahin and Hamzawy volunteered to join Marzouk and representatives of the other three co-sponsors in such a post-conference, follow-through efforts. Marzouk cited Morocco as a good example of a country that is making progress and has had free and open elections. He also cited the successful transition in Mauritania and progress in Yemen and Jordan. He suggested “a community of learners” needs to be built.

### Session 13:

## Identifying Lessons for Democratic Transitions in the Middle East and North Africa

**Whitehead** acknowledged the MENA region has not been given the careful attention it deserves in the academic literature. Hereditary rule in the region provides a likely opportunity for a democratic trigger through a succession crisis. Triggers are not automatic, however, and autocrats can also learn from past democratic transitions and work to prevent these transformations.

There is diversity in the region that requires different tactics: for example, the King of Morocco traces his right to rule to the Prophet, which is a difficult claim to penetrate, while Sunni rulers of Shia-majority countries could be more vulnerable to democratic movements. Attention should also be given to the jurisprudence of Islam and how interpretations of religious law affect the movement toward democracy. There are existing debates within the Arab world about democracy, and these discussions should be watched more closely.

We should look for supporters of democracy outside of the United States and Europe, in places that will have a less-tainted voice in the region; South Africa is an excellent candidate for such support. The development of Al-Jazeera is a welcome step toward independent media, but it must be improved further through diversification of the media, not the destruction of Al-Jazeera.

**LaGamma** noted that UNDP has cited the lack of communication between the West and the Middle East as an obstacle to support for democracy; cultural exchanges have dried up as tensions have increased. Greater focus on democracy education could advance the prospects for democratic transition in the region. There also needs to be increased translation into Arabic of relevant, useful texts from the other regions.

We should work in ways to promote greater recognition of leaders of democracy around the world to highlight their efforts and achievements. The African and European case studies at the conference demonstrate that NGOs and civil society are important factors in the transition to democracy.

**Graham** said that people out of power often overestimate the confidence of those in power. Strategy should be separated from tactics – individual tactics will not always clearly take you to your end goal, but the strategy should be crafted to that end.

We should differentiate between governments and citizens in the United States, Britain, etc. It is not necessary to approach governments first; instead, you can get citizens on your side, who then work to convince their own governments to support democracy. Inside the country, local politics is essential, even if it is not glamorous, as it creates democratic space that can be elevated to the national level.

Cultural influences must not be discounted – poets, writers, and the arts can be influential in developing momentum for democracy. “Humans are going to keep searching for freedom, it is our job to help them.”

**Marzouk** informed participants that the Kawakibi Democracy Transition Center seeks to create a new generation of democracy transition managers by aiding in the connection of resources and the accumulation of skills in the region. Technology and media should be used to advertise democratic movements. In addition, the Center seeks to establish a Kawakibi Chair on Democracy Transition Studies, perhaps leading to granting of a Masters Degree in the subject, as one way to avoid the constant re-invention of this particular wheel, and to empower a new generation of transition managers.

There also needs to be a greater emphasis on developing institutions that provide strategic support, such as the development of a strategic plan for resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict. Arab democrats must work together to offer alternatives to the prevailing models of power in the region.

**Shahin** commented that the experiences of democratic transitions are never perfectly transferable, but general conclusions can be drawn from the case studies. There is no single path to democratization: transitions can occur by pact or by rupture, through intentional action or accidents of history, etc. Democratic transitions are homegrown; they can be assisted by outside actors, but they must develop in the home community. The role of actors and agents is very important, and these actors must agree on concrete steps to be taken toward democratic transition.

Democratization is a multi-faceted process that can best be influenced through apolitical means. External assistance is necessary but not sufficient; in Egypt, popular protests would have to be met with international support to be successful.

**Sparks** stressed again that Communication is an essential element of the democratic transition. In South Africa, informal communication between opposing forces occurred prior to any discussions in public fora.

**Cohen** underlined that political will is necessary to convince the autocratic ruler to concede power. A policy of non-revenge toward the former regime is necessary to promote the needed reconciliation. Successful transitions in Africa only came after long periods of dialogue. He also emphasized the necessity of international support for homegrown democratic movements.

**Wagenseil** noted several themes or issues which had appeared several times over the past three days and which seem to help point the way forward. These include:

- The key role of a mobilized civil society (hence, the importance of freedom of association and assembly);
- Free and active media (which requires freedom of expression);
- A broad agreement amongst all participants on the principles of non-violence (to avoid endangering the state);
- A respect for the rule of law, in the process and in the results;
- The importance of the international environment (including neighbouring states, regional and international organizations, and the national diaspora);
- The value of elections, even if flawed, as essential to cement the transition process and to give legitimacy to the structures which take power. These, in turn, require an independent national Election Commission and credible election observation, by both domestic and international observers.

# Participants' Biographies

## **Nasser Amin**

Nasser Amin is the Director of the Cairo-based Arab Center for the Independence of the Judiciary and the Legal Profession (ACIJLP), a non-governmental institution that works to reinforce and support the status of justice in the Arab regions, an independence of the judiciary, the legal profession and the respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

## **Iván Bába**

Ivan Baba currently serves as Editor-at-Large of *Budapest Analysis*, and he is also a member of the Executive Committee of the International Centre for Democratic Transition. He previously served as the State Secretary in the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

## **César Beltran**

César Beltran is a retired U.S. Foreign Service Officer with extensive experience in public diplomacy, in the European region and elsewhere. He serves as a Senior Advisor of the International Center for Democratic Transition.

## **András Bozoki**

András Bozoki is an Associate Professor in the Department of Political Science at the Central European University in Budapest. In 1990, he participated in the Hungarian National Roundtable Talks, as one of the negotiators of the Opposition Roundtable, representing the Federation of Young Democrats. From 1990-1992, he served first as spokesman and then as political advisor for the Federation of Young Democrats. From 2003-2004, he was political advisor to the Prime Minister of Hungary. He is also the recipient of a 1993 Pulitzer Prize for the members of editorial community of *Magyar Narancs* for "journalistic excellence and the renewal of journalistic language."

## **Hoda El-Khatib Chalak**

Hoda Chalak is a lawyer in Tripoli, Lebanon. She serves as Coordinator of the Civil Society Initiative, based in Beirut.

## **Iryna Chupryna**

Iryna Chupryna graduated in 1998 from the National University of "Kyiv-Mohyla Academy" in Kyiv with a master's degree in Cultural Studies, and in 2001 from the European University Viadrina in Frankfurt (Oder), Germany with a master's degree in European Studies. In 2004 she was the

deputy head of the Secretariat of the Freedom of Choice Coalition, responsible for the development of monitoring projects for the presidential elections in Ukraine. Chupryna is also one of the founding members of the civic party PORA, and from 2004-2006 she was a member of the party's Central Council.

## **Herman Cohen**

Herman J. Cohen spent 38 years in the United States Foreign Service, specializing in African affairs. He served as an American Ambassador in Africa and held several high positions in the Department of State, including Assistant Secretary of State for Africa during the Bush Administration (1989-1993). During that period, he was very involved in the resolution of civil wars in a number of African countries, and inaugurated the first democracy support programs in Africa funded by the United States Government. Following his retirement from the State Department, Mr. Cohen joined the Global Coalition for Africa as a Senior Advisor, specializing in the promotion of democracy and good governance in African countries. After five years with the GCA, Mr. Cohen established his own consulting firm, Cohen and Woods International, specializing in building business links between private sector operators in the United States and Africa.

## **Ebrahim Ebrahim**

Ebrahim Ebrahim is the Coordinator for International Relations at the Head Office of the African National Congress. He joined the liberation movement in South Africa as a youth activist in 1952. After the ANC was banned in 1960, Ebrahim joined the armed wing of the ANC. He was arrested in 1963 and was in jail until 1979. After going into exile in 1980, he was kidnapped and detained in South Africa, where he was severely tortured. He was sentenced to 20 years imprisonment for high treason but was released in 1991 when the appeal court ruled that his kidnapping from a foreign country was illegal. In July 1991, Ebrahim was elected to the National Executive Committee of the ANC; in 1994, he was elected to the National Assembly of Parliament; and in July 2002, he resigned from Parliament to become the Senior Political and Economic Advisor to the Deputy President of South Africa. Ebrahim has also been involved in mediation and discussions related to peacekeeping and constitution making in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi, Sri Lanka, Bolivia, and Nepal.

### **Audrey Gadzekpo**

Audrey Gadzekpo is a Senior Lecturer and Ag. Director of the School of Communication Studies at the University of Ghana. She has 14 years experience of university teaching and research in the areas of media, gender, development, politics and governance. She has more than 20 years practical experience as a journalist, working in many different positions. She is chairperson of the board of the Ghana Integrity Initiative (GII), and serves on the boards of Ghana Broadcasting Corporation, the Public Agenda newspaper and Ghana Center for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana).

### **Paul Graham**

Paul Graham is the Executive Director of the Institute for Democracy in South Africa (IDASA), a non-profit public interest organisation headquartered in Pretoria. During his tenure with IDASA, Mr Graham has been responsible for its election support program, developing its public education work, designing various conflict prevention, mitigation and resolution activities inside and outside South Africa, establishing the local government centre, and its civil society strengthening work. He has observed elections in Angola, Jamaica, Taiwan, and has evaluated elections in South Africa and Kenya.

### **István Gyarmati**

Ambassador Gyarmati is currently Director of the International Centre for Democratic Transition, Chairman of the Board of the Centre for Euro-Atlantic Integration and Democracy in Budapest, and Senior Political Adviser to the Geneva-based Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces. He has served as head of OSCE Missions and as Senior Vice President for Policy and Programs of the EastWest Institute. Amb. Gyarmati holds a Ph.D. in Political Science and is author of numerous publications on security policy, European security, conflict management and Hungarian defense policy.

### **Amr Hamzawy**

Amr Hamzawy is a Senior Associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Dr. Hamzawy previously taught at Cairo University and the Free University of Berlin. His research interests include the changing dynamics of political participation in the Arab world and the role of Islamist opposition groups in Arab politics. Dr. Hamzawy's studies at Cairo University focused on civil society and democratization in the Arab world, Islamism, and the cultural impacts of globalization in Muslim majority societies. He received his Ph.D. from the Free University of Berlin.

### **István Hegedüs**

István Hegedüs is the chairman of the Hungarian Europe Society. He was a participant at the Hungarian political negotiations about the democratic transition, delegated by the Opposition Roundtable, especially to the media committee. From 1990-1994, he was a member of the Hungarian Parliament, serving as the vice-chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee (1990-1993) and as a member of the Committee on European Community Affairs (1993-1994).

### **Sameer Jarrah**

Sameer Jarrah is President of the Arab World Center for Democracy Development & Human Rights in Jordan and is a Senior Lawyer with extensive practical experience in the fields of Policy & Regulatory Reform, Criminal Investigation, Intellectual Property, Corporate Law, Information Technology, and Administrative Law. He provided the Government of Jordan with comprehensive legal support on matters related to Human Rights, Democracy and International Related Conventions and Meetings to create the enabling regulatory and policy environment for promoting the development of the Human Rights & Democracy in Jordan. Jarrah has served on more than 10 National Investigation Committees in respect of Prisoners Rights and Treatments, Parliaments Task force Committee, Bar Association Committee, and others.

### **David Kilgour**

David Kilgour is a retired Canadian Member of Parliament. Mr. Kilgour was elected M.P. three times, and won re-election on five occasions. In 1994 Mr. Kilgour was appointed Deputy Speaker of the House of Commons, as well as Chairman of Committees of the Whole House. He has also served the Canadian government as Secretary of State for Latin America and Africa from 1997-2002, and held the same post for Asia-Pacific in 2002-2003. He has served on the Board of Directors for The Mission (Ottawa), the Ashbury College Foundation (Ottawa) Steering Committee, the Canada-Ukraine Legislative Cooperation Project, and as Chairs of the International Committee for a Free Vietnam's Canadian Chapter, and the Canadian Parliamentary Group for Soviet Jewry.

### **Miroslav Kusy**

Miroslav Kusy is a Professor at the Comenius University in Bratislava, the capital of Slovakia. He was one of the original signatories of Charter 77, which demanded that the Czechoslovak government abide by its international human rights commitments. Following the Velvet Revolution in 1989, he served as Minister of Information in the Czechoslovakia Government of National Reconciliation. He has also

held the UNESCO Chair on Human Rights Education at Comenius University.

### **Robert LaGamma**

Robert LaGamma served for 36 years in the Foreign Service of the United States Information Agency. During that time, he directed a number of USIS offices in Africa. He designed U.S. Government democracy initiatives for both Nigeria and South Africa that were funded by USAID and was responsible for organizing a major conference for Africa on civic education, *CIVITAS*. He is a recipient of USIA's highest award, the Edward R. Murrow award for excellence in public diplomacy. Since his retirement he has continued to work on democracy issues globally.

### **Mohsen Marzouk**

Mohsen Marzouk is the Executive Coordinator of the Kawakibi Democracy Transition Center in Tunis, Tunisia. He currently also serves as Director of the North African Regional Civil Society Program for Freedom House, based in Tunis.

### **Tamás Meszerics**

Tamás Meszerics is a senior adviser to the International Centre for Democratic Transition in Budapest. He is the author of various English and Hungarian-language publications on normative issues of political theory, analytic papers on Hungarian foreign and security policy, and contemporary Central and East European history. He is a frequent commentator with the Hungarian media on developments in international politics.

### **Kent Obee**

Kent Obee is the former Director of the Office of North African, Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs at the United States Information Agency.

### **Robert Pastor**

Robert Pastor is the Vice President of International Affairs and a Professor of International Relations at American University. He established the Center for Democracy and Election Management and the Center for North American Studies at AU. Dr. Pastor served as Director of Latin American Affairs on the National Security Council, was nominated to be Ambassador to Panama, and was the Senior Advisor to the Carter - Nunn - Powell Mission to negotiate a restoration of constitutional government to Haiti. He received a Ph.D. from Harvard University and is the author or editor of 15 books.

### **Richard C. Rowson**

Dick Rowson is President of the Council for a Community of Democracies (CCD). Formerly, he was in international publishing for 25 years, serving successively as President of Praeger Publishers and of Pergamon Press (both in New York) and as Director of Duke University Press, American University Press and Woodrow Wilson Center Press. Previously, he was Director of Policy and Planning, Free Europe, Inc. (Radio Free Europe) in New York and Director of Research and Analysis for East Europe of Radio Free Europe in Munich, for six years. His career in "international political communications" began with twelve years at the Foreign Policy Association (FPA) as Director of the World Affairs Council of Rhode Island, as FPA's Regional Director in the Northeast and as Director of Development. He holds a professional degree (M.I.A) from the Columbia University School of International and Public Affairs and is a graduate of the University of California, Berkeley, in Political Science. He served in the U.S. Navy, 1944-47.

### **Gediminas Šerkšnys**

Gediminas Šerkšnys is currently Ambassador at Large at the Lithuanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. From 1988-1990 he was among the leaders of "Sajudis" in the Lithuanian transition to democracy. In the first government in 1990 he was deputy Foreign Minister, then Minister without portfolio. From 1992 to 1996 he worked in the private sector (IT and Software company). From 1996 to 2000 he was again with the MFA (Undersecretary); from 2000 to 2004 he served as Lithuanian Ambassador to the UN in New York; and in 2006 he spent half a year in Afghanistan where he was heading the civilian section of Lithuanian Provincial Reconstruction Team.

### **Emad Shahin**

Emad El-Din Shahin is a Visiting Associate Professor in the Department of Government at Harvard University, and an Associate Professor in the Political Science Department at the American University in Cairo. He earned his Ph.D. from Johns Hopkins University, School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS). He has taught at George Washington University, Georgetown University, and Al-Akhawayn University in Morocco. Dr. Shahin teaches a variety of courses in comparative politics, the Middle East, and North Africa. He is author two books and many articles.

### **Reza Eslami-Somea**

Reza Eslami-Somea is an Assistant Professor, Faculty of Law at the Shahid Beheshti University in Tehran, Iran. His areas of research and teaching are human rights, democratic citizenship education, public liberties, rights of women & mi-

norities, and Islamic law. He has published several academic articles on human rights subjects, travels often to attend seminars and conferences in US and the Middle East, and organizes workshops and training sessions for youth on human rights issues.

### **Allister Sparks**

Allister Sparks is a South African writer, journalist, and political commentator. He was the editor of *The Rand Daily Mail* when it broke Muldergate, the story of how the apartheid government secretly funded information projects. Sparks later wrote a number of critically-acclaimed books on South Africa's transition from apartheid, including *Tomorrow is Another Country* (1996), *The Mind of South Africa* (1991), and *Beyond the Miracle: Inside the New South Africa* (2006). Sparks founded the Institute for the Advancement of Journalism in South Africa and was its Executive Director from 1992 to 1997.

### **Steven Wagenseil**

Steve Wagenseil retired from the U.S. Foreign Service in early 2002 after over thirty years service; since then, he has worked with the OSCE and the United Nations in democracy promotion and election observation. He had overseas postings in Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Sénégal, Zimbabwe, and Lesotho, as well as in Madrid, Geneva, Strasbourg, and Warsaw. As Director of Multilateral Affairs in the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, he was a member of the U.S. Delegation to the 2000 Warsaw Ministerial Meeting of the Community of Democracies; he represented the OSCE at the Second CD Ministerial in Seoul in 2002. He has been involved in the organization/observation of elections in Namibia, Ukraine, Armenia, Latvia, Georgia, Russia, the Palestinian Territories, the Solomon Islands, Macedonia, and Timor-Leste.

### **Laurence Whitehead**

Laurence Whitehead is an Official Fellow in Politics at Nuffield College, Oxford University, and Senior Fellow of the College. During 2005/6 he served as Acting Warden of the College. He has written several books on democratization, including studies of Latin America and East Asia. He is editor of an Oxford University Press series, 'Studies in Democratization'. He currently chairs Research Committee 13 of the International Political Science Association (Comparative Democratization); and the section on Europe and Latin America of the Latin American Studies Association; and belongs to the steering committee of the Red Eurolatinamericano de Gobernabilidad para el Desarrollo; and serves as a Region Head for Latin America at Oxford Analytica. He

directs the programme on Mexican Studies at Oxford's Latin American Centre.

### **Ahmed Younis**

Ahmed Younis is a Senior Consultant for the Gallup Organization and a Senior Analyst for the Gallup Center for Muslim Studies and the Muslim-West Facts Initiative. He is also a member of the Advisory Committee on U.S.-Muslim World Relations of the United States Institute of Peace (USIP). He is a frequent guest on television and radio shows, and his work has been featured in many leading U.S. newspapers, as well as newspapers in 14 countries. A graduate of Washington & Lee University School of Law, he has studied and lived in Egypt and Saudi Arabia.

# UKRAINE'S ORANGE REVOLUTION

Presentation by Iryna Chupryna

Started after the fraudulent second round of Presidential elections on November 21, 2004, where two main candidates were Viktor Yushchenko and Viktor Yanukovich

**People's power** - For 17 days hundreds of thousands of people daily stayed on the streets of the Ukrainian capital; rallies across Ukraine; famous tent camp of Khreschatik (1,546 tents)

**Non-violent revolution** - Not a single drop of blood shed, "festival" atmosphere, performances of popular bands, burgeoning of popular art

**"Electoral revolution"** - The protests were triggered by the fraudulent election. Comparable to Serbia 2000, Georgia 2003

**"Internet revolution"** - Extensive use of Internet, mail, sms-communication

**Prominent youth activism**

## Favourable domestic factors

Most of the key factors for the revolution's success were elite-related:

**Competitive authoritarian regime:** modicum of independent media, competitive elections, although marred by election fraud, freedom of assembly, moderately strong Parliament

**Weak incumbent capacity:** "lame-duck syndrome" that favours defections (Hale 2005), "split elite", defections within army and security forces.

**Low centralization of power:** defections on the regional level, support for the revolution by the Kyiv city council

**Low support for the incumbent:** strong antagonism to Kuchma's protégé within half of the electorate

**United, strong opposition**

High rating of the opposition candidate Yushchenko

## Other domestic factors

**Belonging to the post-Communist region:**

- Lack of the experience of democratic rule & under-developed democratic institutions;

- Absence of the tradition of military intervention into politics;
- High literacy of population;
- Every qualifying state received aid from USAID;
- Had similar communist regimes, and this similarity facilitates diffusion processes. (Bunce, V. & Wolchik, S. 2006)

**Substantial share of middle class within Ukrainian population:** "middle class revolution" (Karatenicky 2005)

**Vibrant civil society:** 40.000 NGOs in Ukraine (2004 estimate), 10% (4.000) are active. Many NGOs were founded already in the 1990s and by 2004 accumulated a lot of experience and expertise in the field of election-related projects.

**Existence of independent media outlets:** 5th TV Channel, radio Era, Internet-sites "Pravda", "Maidan".

## External factors

Strong leverage of the West on ruling elites was one of key factors that led to the formation of a competitive authoritarian regime. President Kuchma did not want to be a pariah in the West, therefore, the "democratic" façade was preserved, and the regime did not resort to the use of violence or to the crackdown on opposition parties and media. Therefore, in Ukraine external actors were able to exert a strong influence on the nature of the regime and other domestic factors.

## Main tools of Western democratization assistance in Ukraine:

**Funding** – Long-term and sustained Western aid to Ukraine, including aid and technical assistance to the development of civil society. Also important - the export of advanced election monitoring technologies (exit-poll, parallel vote tabulation).

**Diplomacy** – in 2004 - unprecedented diplomatic pressure of the West on the ruling elites for free and fair elections, and after the start of the revolution - for non-violence.

## External factors: diffusion

**Diffusion** – a process wherein new ideas, institutions, policies, models or repertoires of behaviour spread geographically from a core site to other sites, whether within a given state or across states (Bunce et al 2006).

*Diffusion occurs in several principal ways:*

**1. "Neighbor emulation"** – tendency for neighboring countries to converge towards a shared level of democracy or non-democracy (Brinks, D. & Coppedge, M. 2006)

Mixed influence in the case of Ukraine – on one hand, consolidated democracies (Poland, Slovak Republic), on the other hand, authoritarian Russia and Belarus. Prominent role of both Poland –Lithuania and Russia.

**2. Demonstration (“snowballing” effects)** - imitation of the appealing examples (here - of successful transitions to democracy). Ukrainian activists drew inspiration from Georgia and Serbia, Azerbaijani and Belarusian ones – from Ukraine.

**3. More purposeful and planned diffusion processes via collaborative networks** - Networks of “revolutions’ graduates” operated in Ukraine in 2004. Intensive exchange of methods and skills took place during the trainings by former activists of Otpor, Kmara and OK-98. Freedom House in Ukraine - chief coordinator of this activity. In Ukraine a relative share of purposeful diffusion of experience was larger than one of demonstration effects, while, for example, in Azerbaijan, simple demonstration effects were predominant.

## Civic campaign PORA

Youth campaign with a developed regional structure and estimated 35.000 participants. Yellow and black wings were named after the color of printed products and symbolics. Carried out extensive country-wide informational and mobilization campaign, distributed millions of stickers, posters, leaflets. Set up a first tent camp in Kyiv already after the first election round. Conducted many witty and original actions in Kyiv, regularly covered on TV (although mostly negatively, but this only increased informational “presence” effect). Used humor and satire both in actions and printed materials - if authorities can be ridiculed, people are not afraid of them anymore.

## Ukraine: challenges of post-transition period

Main causes of the difficult post-transition period and ongoing political crisis in Ukraine: Core problem - “dual executive”. Two centers of power with comparable authorities – Parliament and President (RNBO). The problem is aggravated by the hasty constitutional reform conducted in January 2006. Undeveloped political parties that serve as vehicles of charismatic leaders. Lack of accountability at all levels of power, while elections by party lists only aggravate this problem.

But...The parliamentary elections in September 2007 and in March 2006 were recognized as free and fair by OSCE and other international observers. Ukraine enjoys genuine freedom of press and freedom of choice

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## Election results 30.09.2007

### Final results of the pre-term parliamentary elections:

- Party of Regions – 34,37 % (2006 – 32,14%)
- Bloc of Yulia Tymoshenko (BYuT) – 30,71 % (2006 – 22,29%)
- Our Ukraine – People’s Self-Defense (OU-PSD) – 14,15% (2006- 13,95%)
- Communist Party – 5,39 % (2006 -3,66%)
- Lytvyn Bloc (LB) – 3,96 % (2006 - 2,44%)
- Socialist Party of Ukraine (SPU) - (2006 - 5,66%)
- Pora-PRP – 1,47 %

# Gallup Muslim World Poll (2006) – Extracts

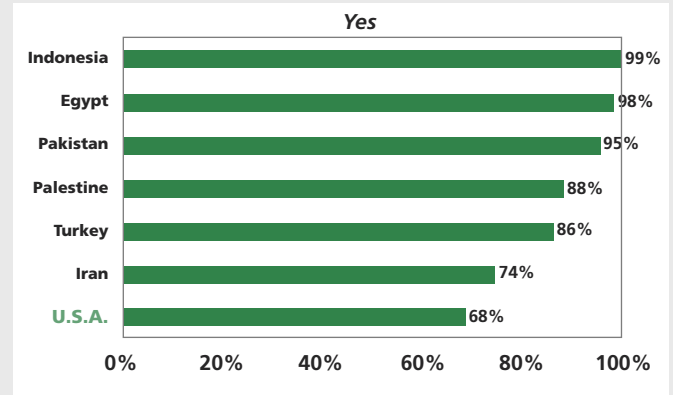
## Theocracy vs. Secular Democracy?

### Religion and Democracy in the Muslim World

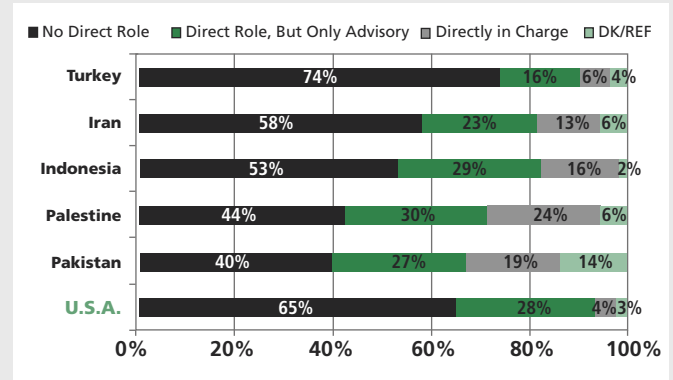
#### Hearing the voice of a Billion



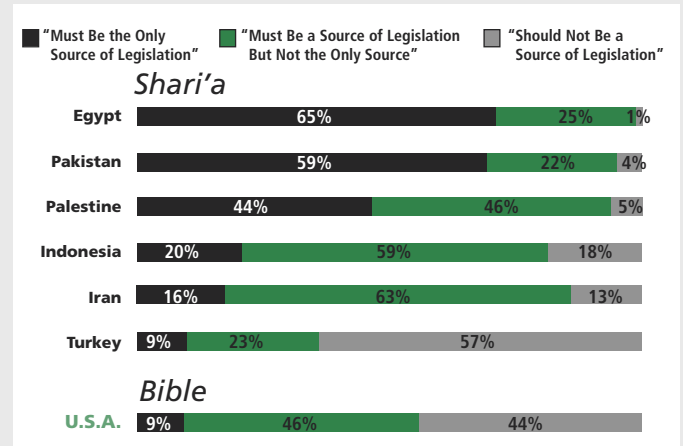
#### Is Religion an important part of your daily life?



#### What Role for Religious Leaders in Drafting Legislation?



#### What Role for Religious Sources?



#### What Muslims Admire Most about the West

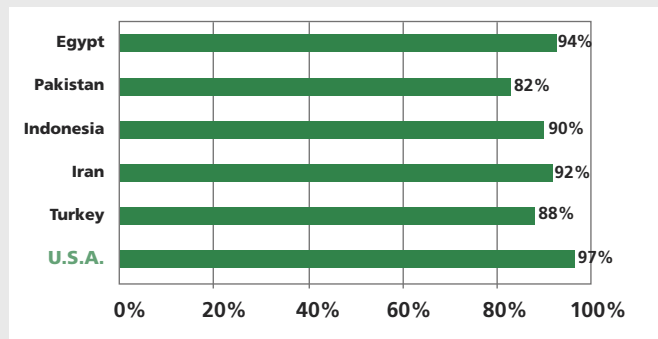
"Freedom of the press, opinion and expression. Also, scientific advancement" -Saudi Arabia

"Social justice and having access to nuclear power. Real democracy" -Iran

"The way they work hard. It has helped them in developing their countries" -Pakistan

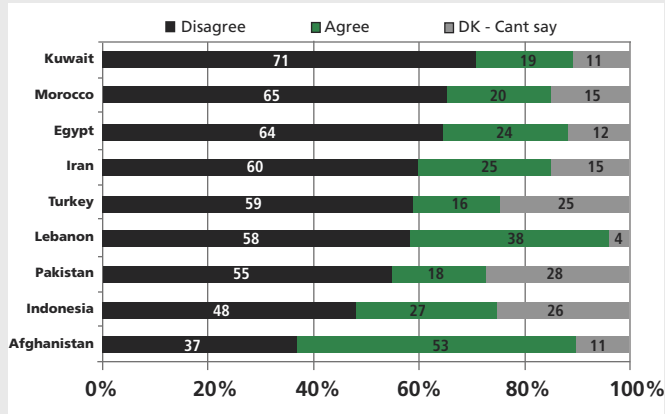
"Liberty and freedom and being open minded with each other" -Morocco

#### A Constitution for a New Country Should Include Guarantees for Free Speech



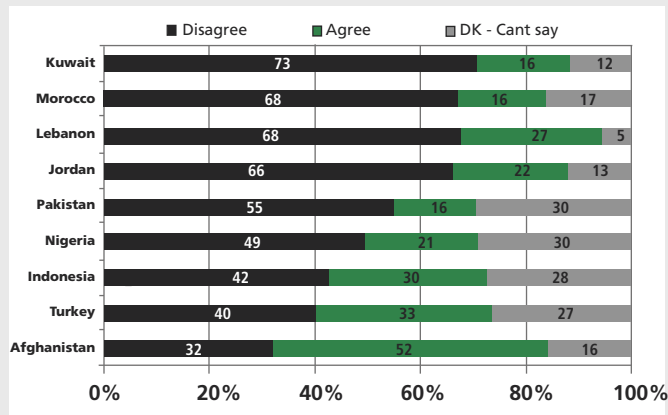
## Political Domination

The U.S. is serious about supporting the establishment of democratic systems of government



## Political Domination

The U.S. will allow people in this region to fashion their own political future



## Shari'a and the Sultan

*“All that restrained rulers from acting as tyrants was Islamic law, sharia. Since the law was based on divine rather than human principles, no ruler could change it to serve his own interests.”*

-Richard W. Bulliet  
*“The Case for Islamo-Christian Civilization”*

## Summary

Free elections are likely to keep producing religiously-based parties, especially in the Arab world. A vote for religious parties is a vote against corruption and/or tyranny, not a vote for a theocracy, or against individual freedoms. Muslims and Americans agree on the need to control extremism. Americans see conflict with Muslims mostly as a public relations issue primarily sourced in misunderstandings. Muslims globally see the conflict with the West mostly as Policy and Respect issues.

## Recommendations

Our findings lend the weight of empirical data in support of recommendations made by the 2005 Council on Foreign Relations' Independent Task Force on Arab Democracy: World leaders should support genuine democracy in the Arab/Muslim world. Governments should support the political participation of any group or party committed to abide by the rules and norms of the democratic process.

Source: *“In Support for Arab Democracy: Why and How”*  
 Council on Foreign Relations Independent Task Force Report No. 54. Co-Chairs Vin Weber and Madeline Albright

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# Summary of Conference at American University, March 9, 2007

On March 9, 2007, a conference took place at American University in Washington, D.C., entitled “*Transitions to Democracy in the Middle East and North Africa: Lessons from Other Regions.*” The conference was organized by the Council for a Community of Democracies (CCD), the American University Center for Democracy and Election Management (CDEM), the International Center for Democratic Transition in Budapest (ICDT), and the Center for the Study of Islam and Democracy (CSID). Participants came from the sponsoring organizations, other academic institutions and NGOs working on issues of democracy in the Middle East, the Embassy of Mali, the Gallup Organization, Al-Jazeera, et al. The conference’s purpose was to ask questions concerning barriers to democracy in the Middle East and North Africa and find what lessons can be learned from earlier transitions in Europe and Africa, in preparation for a three-day conference on the subject later in the year. It took place in the context of preparations by NGOs and civil society for the Fourth Ministerial Meeting of the Community of Democracies, to be held in Bamako, Mali in November 2007.

The basic premise was that men and women everywhere aspire to freedom, but people from each country must chart their own course to get there. Although transitions to democracy are lengthy and dangerous, they are worth pursuing. The MENA region does not suffer from a “democracy deficit” among its people, but amongst its institutions, including undemocratic elites which control the countries. The role of organized religion (the Catholic Church, Islam) was also analyzed in a search for problems and solutions. Democracy must be seen to be compatible with Islamic practice and culture, and vice-versa; ignorance or fear of Islam will only exacerbate the problems.

The question was how to analyze the experiences of activists in Central and Eastern Europe and Africa and to replicate them to useful effect in the Middle East and North Africa. It was felt that the recent European and African experiences will transfer more easily than those of older, “mature” democracies in the West; Latin America falls somewhere between the two.

Key elements for the recent transitions included mobilization of civil society and the general public (including women) to push for a transition; freedom of the media (domestic and international, print and electronic) and its use to communicate activists’ goals to domestic and international audiences; and the roles played by national diaspora, country neighbors and the wider international community. It was apparent that a small but active percentage of the population can tip the balance. Participants discussed various strategies and tactics, including the value of an agreed, inclusive goal that will not alienate any sector of society; wide social investment in education for democracy; a commitment to non-violent confrontation, including relevant local religious principles; an understanding that any transition will be a long-term process and include occasional setbacks; and moderated expectations of a quick “democracy dividend” while recognizing the potential link between democracy and development. Elections are recognized as a key element, even flawed or fraudulent ones, as they acknowledge the role that must be played by the electorate; in addition elected representatives tend, over time, to assert their responsibilities in governance. It is therefore important to develop competent, independent national Election Commissions, and to ensure election observation by domestic and international observers.

The follow-on conference was asked to develop concrete suggestions and recommendations for steps that can and should be taken to facilitate democratic transitions. These should be addressed to all relevant participants: civil society groups, media representatives, political party and legal activists, religious leaders and scholars, the national diaspora, neighbor countries, regional or worldwide multilateral organizations, and the international community at large.

# Autocratic Regimes: When and Why they Liberalize and How Established Democracies Can Help

Laurence Whitehead, Nuffield College, Oxford

## SUMMARIZED:

### i) “Autocratic Regimes” as a Category

This conference deploys “autocracy” as its fundamental category, in preference to any of these alternatives.... (W)hatever terminology is chosen, analysts should guard against blurring all undemocratic regimes into a single poorly delineated category, where only negative attributes (absence of democracy) defines the field. Surveying the Middle East, for example, I would think it worth distinguishing some experiences of traditional absolutism...from examples of patrimonialism...totalitarianism...police state...one-party regimes...and theocracies.... There is also religious constitutionalism, kleptocracy, and personalist regimes....

Given this diversity of undemocratic regimes in the Middle East ... can we sensibly group them all together as “autocracies” and then expect to derive some generally applicable rules governing when and why they might liberalize, or how the established democracies should act towards them? It seems unlikely.

### ii) When Does Liberalization Become More Probable?

.... Most of the time autocracies continue in place due to a mixture of support, intimidation, and inertia. But it is possible to identify certain episodes or types of situation which expose them to sudden vulnerability, at least for a short while.... Succession crisis; external military defeat; certain types of economic setback; ideological demonstration effects; all these suggested themselves as possible precipitants of liberalizing reforms.... (T)he four suggested triggers... only constitute very partial determinants of particular outcomes, but each does have its own logical structure.

— **Succession crisis** is the easiest. If a great deal of arbitrary power is concentrated in the hands of an individual autocrat, or his small circle of dependents and cronies, then his elimination is almost bound to precipitate a regime crisis.... A succession crisis... could simply offer the opportunity for a

rival autocrat to take power, or indeed for a power struggle with unpredictably destructive and antidemocratic consequences....

—**External military defeat** .... can take the form of the outright failure of an act of aggression..., or inability to protect nation from an invader..., but more indirect forms of discredit are also possible.... But defeats of this kind do not necessarily bring autocracy to an end. Much depends on how they are interpreted, and what alternatives are thought to be available.... The trigger of a defeat tells us something about increased probabilities of autocratic demise, but the information is more about timing than overall process and outcome....

—A third type of trigger concerns certain types of **economic setback**.... not merely the actual performance of the economy but how that performance is explained and understood by the relevant political actors. A huge economic setback that is not attributed to failings of the political system could be far less threatening than a much smaller fall in output (or frustration of growth expectations) where the regime is seen as directly to blame.... With that caveat, it remains true that a variety of authoritarian regimes that sought public legitimacy by delivering strong economic performance proved unable to survive once that instrumental prop was removed.... Economic setbacks may either precipitate outright crisis and regime overthrow (immediate trigger), or perhaps more frequently, set in motion more extended and controlled processes of regime change (an indirect trigger).

—Our fourth “trigger” for regime change could be **ideological demonstration effects**.... In general, international demonstration mechanisms of this type are never automatic – they require avenues of transmission that may either encourage imitation or prompt evasive action. As with the other trigger mechanisms discussed in this section, they tell us more about the timing of potential step changes in autocratic systems of rule than their content....

### **iii) Why Autocracies May (Sometimes) Liberalize – and Even Lose Control**

.... There are rather different answers for the various different sub-types of autocracy identified in the first section. Answers also differ depending on the level of analysis and the time frame addressed.... More concretely we can say that with the ending of the Cold War nearly all the richest and most powerful countries of the world shared a broadly democratic form of government that exerted a magnetic pull on the aspirations of the many millions of less fortunate people living in countries and regions where personal freedom and security was not so well provided. Since the spread of global communications and the diffusion of a single consumer market economy model has extended into every corner of even the most remote and inaccessible territories, subjects ruled by autocratic government have been increasingly able to compare the conditions under which they live with those apparently available in the advanced democracies. Finding their own conditions inferior millions of them have been impelled to migrate, legally or illegally. This fuels dissatisfaction of those who remain behind. Combined with the lobbying influence the migrants may acquire as they become settled communities in the advanced democracies this can exert a powerful long-term influence on the regimes they leave behind, undermining repressive structures of political control.

This is quite a powerful and widely applicable explanation of pressures for liberalization that affect many contemporary autocracies, especially those most open to the wide array of influences we can refer to under the umbrella term “globalization”.... So here we have an at least partial explanation for the tendencies toward liberalization that may be found in many parts of the contemporary world – an explanation that is more contextually specific and empirically traceable than the broader invocations of “human nature” mentioned at the beginning of this section. It receives special attention here because it also connects directly to the theme of the final section – “how established democracies can help”.

But these are also important caveats. First, this is only one factor among several.... Second, it is far from uniform in its effects.... Moreover, some diasporas are seen in their home countries as a successful and representative cross section of the domestic society and are therefore welcomed back as dynamic contributors to national reconstruction. But others may be resented, distrusted or even feared as instruments of foreign domination, servants of the countries to which they migrated.... As these contrasting examples suggest, autocracies

differ markedly in their ways of coping with globalization-enhanced pressures to liberalize....

To summarize then, the western democracies can and do bring powerful pressure to bear on the various autocracies on their periphery, and they may well operate in association with democratically inclined diasporas. But this insight provides no more than a loose and provisional heading for discussion. Other factors intervene, different sub-types of autocracies respond in different ways, and the west’s “allies” or “protégés” vary greatly in their objectives and capacities to catalyze democratic convergence. Given all this

### **iv) How can Established Democracies Help?**

i) The structure of each “autocratic” regime needs to be carefully...studied before action is taken. There is no...automatic formula to fit all cases.... Exiles and diasporas can sometimes play a constructive role, but they should not be relied upon as the sole interpreters...of democratic values....

ii) Effective help .... requires consensus building among the western democracies .... a cool assessment of what commitments and resources may be required and a realistic understanding of the sacrifices that the democracy promoters may therefore be called upon to make. Western democracies ... also have security interests that can be jeopardised by disorderly regime change, they have strategic and economic assets to protect, and they have domestic public opinions to accommodate....

iii) Western “help” may occasionally have to take the form of a massive intrusion or imposition, but that is rarely likely to be the most effective or durable form of democracy promotion.... Western “help” is likely to be most useful if it is delivered at the right strategic moment in the evolution of a local liberalising dynamic (i.e. when one of the “triggers”... has been activated).... So long as the autocratic regime remains firmly in control the most effective form of help may consist of background encouragement of pluralism and the traditional freedoms.... accompanied by contingency plans for more active and targeted support when the timing becomes right....

iv) In order for the advanced democracies to marshal the resources and domestic support required for an assertive act of democracy promotion overseas, much persuasion will be needed to convince western public opinion.... Part of the process of “imposing” a democracy involves discrediting the



legitimacy claims of the previous autocratic regime, and boosting the morale of the self-proclaimed liberating forces.... Western democracies that forget how they are perceived by others ... will be prone to miscalculations and over-reactions in the face of external criticism....

v) Most so-called “autocratic” regimes contain various partially competitive actors and interests. Some of these are more capable of evolving towards a more tolerant and pluralist stance than others. Similarly, the opponents of an autocratic regime typically have mixed credentials and potential as participants in a process of democratic construction. Where autocracy takes this conditional form western democracies are most likely to help the cause of liberalization if they extend a degree of qualified encouragement and support to a wide range of different viewpoints.... A broad-based and tolerant western approach, encouraging the free expression of Islamist aspirations usually stands a better chance of promoting democratic construction than a narrow “pick the winners” strategy.

vi) Finally, if the western democracies are to win “hearts and minds” of ordinary people currently living under autocratic rule, their most powerful underlying weapon will be the direct appeal of the liberal model of rights, freedoms, and protective guarantees....

# Arab Spring Fever

**Nathan J. Brown and Amr Hamzawy**

The National Interest Online

08.29.2007

*(full text available online – subscription required)*

## Summarized:

EUPHORIA SWEEPED across legions of observers of Arab politics two years ago. A series of unusual scenes on the streets of the Middle East nurtured an inspiring story line of an emerging “Arab spring” that mimicked the earlier triumph of democracy from the Philippines to Prague.... Many of the most deeply entrenched Arab regimes appeared to be on the verge of losing their authoritarian grip. ... (T)he fall of the Arab equivalent of the Berlin Wall seemed at hand.

Today, little of that euphoria remains. New political realities have either silenced the optimists or caused them to rue the consequences of the changes they had earlier hailed.... Throughout the region, the strong showing of Islamists in parliamentary elections has created doubts about Arab democratization and highlighted the risks it bears for American strategic interests. The tragic developments in Iraq, Lebanon and Palestine... have enabled Arab democracy pessimists to dismiss easily any talk about positive political reforms as the fantasy of Western well-intentioned humanists—or misguided ideologists—who do not understand the real Arab world and its unsuitability for democracy.

The problem with the manic debate in Washington... is that it misses gradual but real changes occurring in the region. There are many deep political problems in the Arab world. But that should not mask a variety of political openings in the region—many of which are only visible when one takes a longer-range view. Despite rising disenchantment outside the Arab world regarding Arab democratization, regional political dynamics have been driven to a great extent by an indigenous freedom agenda. In the level of intellectual debate, the battle for democracy has been fought—and won.... And among the broader public, there is growing support for political openness. The problem is that democracies are not built in salons and on satellite channels.

Dreams of democratic openings, competitive elections, the rule of law and wider political freedoms have captured the imagination of clear majorities in the Arab world. The dominance of the idea of democracy in the public space has even

forced authoritarian ruling establishments to cast about for new pro-reform language in order to communicate their policies to the populace. Even Islamist and leftist opposition movements have, at least rhetorically, dropped most of their skepticism about political rights, freedoms and pluralist mechanisms, developing a strategic commitment to gradual democratic reform.

The rise of democracy is not confined to rhetoric; limited but real changes are taking place.... (O)ver the past two decades in much of the Arab world, ruling establishments have substantially eased the restrictions imposed on freedom of expression. Media outlets, intellectual forums and academic institutions have become venues of pluralist argumentation. The era of state monopolies over information and ideas has ended. Ordinary Arab citizens have gained access to multiple sources of information and become systematically exposed to competing perspectives of domestic and international events. Of course, significant differences continue among countries.... (F)urthermore, repressive practices against opinion-makers and state ownership of media outlets have hardly ceased....

Is it analytically legitimate or sound to describe these changes as democratization? Are they merely cosmetic changes, or have they increased the probability of successful democratic reform in the Arab world? While the situation differs from country to country, there can be no doubt that ruling establishments' views of reforms are extremely constrained.... But we must move beyond understanding all political outcomes solely in terms of the intentions of leaders. Real change has occurred, but will it continue? And if so, will it be change for the better?

ARAB REGIMES can be divided into three basic political categories: weak or failing states, strict authoritarian states and semi-authoritarian states.... It is in the third category, the semi-authoritarian states, that we find the best chances for reform. In all three cases, there is at least the thread of possibility for reform, but we need to be realistic about what kind of change is feasible.



Much of the renewed cynicism about democracy is based on mistaking the region's most problematic states for the norm—weak, failing or...incomplete: Lebanon, Iraq and Palestine.... In all three cases, state weakness has encouraged international actors to favor specific parties, fomenting internecine conflict.... Such states present the most difficult challenge for would-be democratizers. Fostering democracy while simultaneously strengthening state institutions is a difficult task in any setting. In the midst of unresolved international conflicts, it may be nearly impossible.

STRICT AUTHORITARIAN systems—a minority in the Arab world—have been largely impervious to any liberalization. But there are some opportunities for limited change....

In such countries—where politics has been void of any competition between rulers and oppositions for a long time—it makes little sense to speculate about fundamental democratic reforms in the near future. But it is not unrealistic to imagine that a combination of internal demands and external pressure might nudge some into gradually allowing a greater degree of pluralism in the political sphere and granting citizens some basic political rights, such as freer association or expression—these forces already induced lower-end reforms. Past generations of Arab leaders have allowed a measure of liberalization when they became convinced that it was beneficial in currying international support, balancing or taming would-be rivals and managing conflicts within the political elite. An international environment supporting political reform can make a difference in such cases, especially in the Gulf countries, where the leadership has tied national security to Western powers. But we must be aware that such changes would not bring democracy but only a more liberalized authoritarianism, which has been quite stable regionally. And it is to such semi-authoritarian regimes that we now turn.

Weak states and closed authoritarian systems, while distressing examples of Arab politics gone wrong, are not the norm. In the third set of Arab countries, authoritarianism is well-entrenched but not unlimited. Existing semi-authoritarian regimes... have opposed any true democratization. Democratic institutions and practices often exist on paper but are very weak and easily outflanked by the institutions of authoritarianism.

Yet these semi-authoritarian regimes allow some space for popular participation, and in many countries that space has increased significantly over the past two decades. Opposition

groups have been allowed to operate and participate in legal politics. And even if opposition groups are often divided between weak armchair secular movements and more broadly based but less clearly democratic Islamist movements, they have still been able to gradually expand their representation in the political process....

In all these cases, the reforms were significant but were not breakthroughs. They have been limited and difficult to build upon. Not a single dramatic democratic breakthrough has taken place. But the dynamics unleashed by regime-managed reforms have renewed and revitalized the interest of opposition movements in the political process. The outcome is an Arab political scene that looks far more lively and much less predictable when compared to the political stasis and stagnation of the 1990s.

THE PROBLEM is not the absence of political change in the Arab world... (i) it is whether fundamental political reform—democratization, rather than mere tactical uses of liberalization—is possible.

In such semi-authoritarian regimes, three paths to further political reform are possible. The most likely may simply be more of the same: continued incremental change within the boundaries of existing political arrangements.... The main residue of the Arab spring is not a new kind of democratic politics but a handful of slightly more pluralistic or ambitious parliaments..., and even blurrier red lines—especially regarding freedom of expression and organization—in other countries.

A second possibility for reform promises fuller democratization not through carefully managed change, but through surprise.... Democratic change in other parts of the world has often resulted from a shock to the political system—economic crisis, defeat in war, leadership succession. The problem, of course, is that such shocks do not necessarily bring democratic change: They are just as likely to bring about instability, deepened autocracy or even civil war. But when political opposition is well-organized and undividedly committed to democratic change, it is often successful in obtaining favorable outcomes. In short, such shocks can provoke democratic change—if opposition leaders prepare for it. In southern Europe, Latin America, South Africa, and Central and Eastern Europe, democracy has fared far better when opposition movements had the time and inclination to develop democratic ideologies and practices before they were faced with the prospect of gaining power.

The semi-authoritarian regimes in the Arab world have shown impressive abilities to weather economic and political crises in the past: They lost wars, presided over economic hardship and passed through succession crises. In none of these cases, however, did they face competent and deep-rooted democratic oppositions ready to seize the opportunities presented by regime shocks.... (S)ecular and Islamist movements in some countries seem to be preparing—and sometimes experimenting with cooperation—for a democratic transition if the currently deeply entrenched regimes falter.

By their very nature, shocks are unpredictable, but there is one kind that is inevitable even if the timing is unknown: the incapacitation or death of an autocrat. The highly centralized political systems characterizing most Arab regimes (especially the republican ones, where the president has no royal family to report to) means that a ruler's demise can unleash a disorienting crisis, activating latent conflicts within the regime and forcing new would-be rulers to obtain popular support that the late ruler learned to dispense with....

A final avenue for political reform is negotiated power-sharing between a pressured government and a rising but frustrated opposition that realize they cannot vanquish each other. Up to this point, no Arab society has come close to such a standoff.... Realistically, it is only mainstream Islamist movements who are likely to pose a strong challenge, and regimes have generally dealt with them as security issues (to be quashed or contained) rather than political rivals (who might be bargained with). But because such movements are broadly based—hardly limited to the political arena and encompassing religious, educational, social, cultural and charitable activities—they are not easily suppressed. Some regimes have experimented with easing the security obsession, opting to manage Islamist movements as serious political actors—and therefore as candidates not simply for arrests and detention but as partners and rivals for inclusion, domestication and co-optation.... Such negotiations become easier when the Islamist movement is able to present itself as reformist, rather than revolutionary, and to dispense doubts about its loyalty to the nation-state framework. Several of the leading Islamist movements in the region have therefore worked over the past few years to cultivate precisely that image. What is unclear is whether such an approach can evolve—on both sides—from a short-term tactic to a long-term strategy with real power-sharing.

What should be noted about all three of these scenarios is that none necessarily brings democratic nirvana overnight. The second and the third paths depend very much on an incorporation of Islamist movements as normal political actors. There simply is no way to democratize by crushing the region's most popular groups—in almost all of these countries, Islamists. If Islamists are to be confronted as security challenges and suppressed, chances for democratization are bound to remain minimal. And there will be little liberalization as well; the repressive tools built by some states to use against Islamists can be turned against opposition forces of all stripes.

WE NEED to avoid choosing between unrealistic idealism and brutal cynicism. The wider regional scene does not look as bleak as the democratization pessimists in the United States tend to depict it.... Change has been occurring and further reform is possible. But it is neither inevitable nor bound to be purely democratic in nature....

From the beginning, the United States focused on the most difficult cases: failed or weak states, and unbridled autocracies. And while American leaders have spoken of a long-term struggle, they showed stunning impatience in practice. The United States quickly recoiled when initial efforts led down a worrying path....

Finally, while the American thrust was accompanied by inspiring, almost soaring, rhetoric, it was never married to an effective set of policy tools. Indeed, it might even be said that there was no real policy—only a mentality and a rhetorical commitment that supported democracy and freedom in very general ways. This was coupled with a fairly familiar set of training, technical assistance and capacity-building programs that had been borrowed from very different experiences in Eastern Europe and Latin America....

A course correction could help the United States promote positive change consistent with its own interests. First, the United States should concentrate on the most likely candidates for reform, the semi-authoritarian states. Democracy promotion should not be a tool solely to depose despots who do not cooperate with the United States or to conjure capable states into being.... It would help if U.S. policymakers would be franker—and more sophisticated—about short-term tensions between security and democratization. When the effort has adopted an attitude of realistic, rather than messianic, democracy promotion...it has produced tensions

but also results, and the bilateral relationship remained largely intact.

Ultimately, we have to be able to devise an appropriate set of tools.... The standard democracy-promotion tool kit—...parliamentary strengthening, support for the judiciary, civil-society training and electoral assistance—does little harm and in some Arab states actually has some accomplishments to claim. But it is unlikely to lead to systemic change.

This mix of approaches and policies will not transform the Arab world overnight. But it will bring a greater dose of realism, promote sustainable efforts..., lessen the tension between American interests and values, and put the United States more firmly on the side of positive political change in the region.

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# Democratic Development in Jordan

Sameer Jarrah

## (abstract)

### A. An Overview

Jordan's most recent efforts at democracy began eighteen years ago, but this has not been the only time in Jordanian history when the country has experimented with democracy and pluralism.... This year marks the 77th anniversary of the establishment of the first Legislative Council in Jordan, which was launched in April 1929, putting the cornerstone of the consequent parliamentary legislative life in Jordan....

The kingdom's history of reform began in 1989 when it reluctantly agreed to IMF adjustment measures following a prolonged economic crisis.... In recent years, the kingdom has focused most of its national efforts on economic reform.... The combined effect of these policies...provided Jordan with an impressive 7 percent growth rate in 2004.

The push for economic reform that has characterized King Abdullah's eight years on the throne has not been matched, however, by a similar push toward expanded liberalization and democratization. This inertia is exemplified by the extended period during which the king has governed by issuing dozens of royal decrees rather than through the parliamentary mechanisms of a constitutional monarchy. The regime explains this arrangement as a reaction to the barrenness of parliamentary life, in which ideological parties are weak, personality cliques are powerful, and a blocking coalition of Islamists and tribal conservatives regularly found common ground in opposing some of the government's more progressive reforms.

Despite economic progress and a promising start to political reform in the 1990s, the past five years have been a period of regression for the political rights and participation of Jordanian citizens. The lack of continuing progress has created an ongoing confrontation between the government and other major social forces.... Examples of this lack of progress include the passage of the Association and Assembly Act, which added new restrictions on the freedom of expression and freedom of political movement...coupled with the nationalization of the media,...paralyzing the effectiveness of the Parliament using many ways, allowing the executive authority to bully on every thing, absence of dialogue with the effective political forces....

The frequent setbacks lead by the consecutive government have left us in a position where the government is in confrontation with professional unions..., with the parliament...and with the social forces aggrieved by the economic and political policies and the governing elites.... (T)hese tensions have a great potential for moving towards aggravation....

### B. Years of Regression

...(E)fforts to stymie reform in the last five years include: the freezing of an important draft law aimed at limiting corruption; using the security apparatus as an excuse to sharply restrict public discussions and debates; passing the new law on terrorism; and increasing taxes and thereby exacerbating class-based tensions.

...(O)ne major policy that does not change...is the excessive strictness against public freedoms...viewing any attempt to widen them as a grave and serious threat to the "Security" ... and the actual freezing of the spirit of national reconciliation represented by the National Charter, closing the doors before national dialogue, restricting public freedoms especially freedoms of speech, opinion and association, increasing instances of encroaching upon human rights and freedoms.... (R)egular elections continued with interruption and that there have been an elected parliament, political and partisan plurality but the real national momentum required for the democratic transformation has been completely paralyzed resulting in freezing many advanced draft laws, the governments' appetite for reconsideration of liberal legislations and fabrication of side battles with the civil society organizations especially the parties, professional unions and the press. The area for consultation and participation has shrunk....(T)he Terrorist Acts Law and the public Assembly Law 2001, not to mention dozens of laws that encroach upon basic freedoms of the people..., endorsement of raising controversial sales and income taxes...(and) economic options that lack social conviction and agreement (which) cause the middle lower classes to bear increasing burdens at a time when all economic and social transformation programs have failed to contain high rates of poverty and unemployment or limit the increasing gap between high income and mid and low income categories.



The failed momentum of reform efforts is also evident in the numbers of prominent Jordanian reformists who once worked with or for the government but who have now abandoned official channels, with some even leaving the country. The list of such reformers is akin to a list of some of Jordan's best and brightest. . . . Those who did not leave found that the Government had managed to marginalize their roles. . . . Therefore, while reformists have scattered, reforms initiatives papers scattered too including "We All Make Jordan" as well as "Jordan Is First".

With the stalemate between pro- and anti-reform political elites, any further progress toward democracy in Jordan will have to await a clear push from the King. He has repeatedly declared that he had been suffering of the obstacles put in the way to reformation initiatives and of the slackness in implementation. . . . In the past, the Palace used to support and sponsor reformation initiatives aiming at creating a national concord around them. However, following the King's speech at Washington , he will find no other way but to lead such initiatives and get involved in their details after the consecutive governments have not only failed to deal with such initiatives, but also emptied them from content and taken away their credibility. Perhaps this royal step represents a glimpse of hope to the reformist to get back to the arena.

# Transition to Democracy in Iran: Challenges and Prospects

Reza Eslami-Somea

## 1. Historical and Social Facts:

-The power structure in the country has never been democratic. The country has witnessed despotism, tyranny and autocracy throughout its history. A few have always controlled the power and the resources.

-The rule of law and limited power have been unknown conceptions to many dynasties that came to power one after another without people's consent.

-People have always been considered subjects of the rulers and not citizens who have legal and social contracts with the government. The power therefore never felt responsible or accountable.

- Religious institutions and teachings do not provide for democratic model of government.

## 2. Challenges:

-The concepts of citizenry and citizenship rights as well as civil society and political pluralism are not recognized by the political rule; nor are the notion of democracy and its characteristics established features in the legal and constitutional system.

- Democratic movements in the last 100 years have not been democratic, and at times have turned violent.

-State monopoly over mass media, and the lack of freedom of expression and the press.

-Restrictions on NGOs and civil society organizations, as well as on political parties to participate in public life.

## 3. Opportunities and prospects:

-People's familiarity with the necessities of modern world and their readiness for reform and democracy, mostly due to social and cultural exchanges as well as information technology.

-The interest among different walks of life, women and the youth in particular, to learn more about human rights, peace and democracy, and the need for peaceful and non violent transition.

-Activities of certain NGOs and academic centers aiming for awareness rising, capacity building and empowerment (the case of "Pathways to Democracy Conference" held on 22-23 April 2007.)

# A Brief Description of the Current Political Situation in Lebanon

**Hoda El Khatib Chalak**

The events that are currently occurring in Lebanon on the political and civil society fronts are of great significance. In the last few years, Lebanon is undergoing democratic reforms that are manifested in several political and social forms of expression. The Lebanese political landscape appears in a state of severe tension between sovereignty and independence on one hand and foreign interference on the other, the latter ranging from declared political statements regarding Lebanon up to the wish to impose custody and control over the Lebanese state. The Lebanese people, in a large percentage of diverse political, social, and economic groups, have expressed their desire for complete independence in their country. The intensity of the Lebanese people's expression has led to a dangerous security situation including numerous assassinations and explosions. However, this situation did not affect the Lebanese people's determination for sovereignty in their country.

Lebanon is now close to the presidential election which appears to be a critical point in determining the near future of this country. The geographic and political presence of Lebanon in the highly tensed Middle East area makes of any manifestation of a desire for democracy in this country an important catalyst in the entire Middle East region. Thus, the international community is really concerned with the current events in Lebanon.

Lebanon has resorted to the international community regarding

- (1) the international tribunal for the assassinations occurring in Lebanon including the assassinations of Prime Minister Rafik Hariri and several ministers, parliament members, journalists, politicians, and civilians,
- (2) United Nations resolutions, and
- (3) the upcoming presidential elections in Lebanon and the guarantee of its occurrence amidst secure circumstances.

The Lebanese recourse to the international community constitutes an essential measure for the protection of this country and its independence and for ensuring a democratic system that respects the concepts of citizenship and human rights. This political and social movement in Lebanon constitutes a progressive example for democracy in the Middle East region.

# A Case Study of Ghana's Transition to Democracy

by Audrey Gadzekpo

## (abstract)

Ghana led decolonization in sub-Saharan Africa and the subsequent trend toward authoritarian rule. In the 1970's Ghana was among the leading countries that slipped into economic decay. Ghana was not the first country to re-democratize in Africa, but today it appears to be leading the Continent's re-democratization efforts, thus providing an important case-study.

Shortly after independence in 1957, Ghana passed the Preventive Detention Act, whose effect was to make it easier for the government to detain opponents, almost in perpetuity. Amendments to the Constitution in 1960 gave more arbitrary powers to the President. By 1964 Ghana had become a de facto one-party state, and by 1966 there was little tolerance for dissent, human rights or freedom of expression. The last military government, under JJ Rawlings, was the most repressive and the longest in power, from December 1981 until January 1993.

In 1991 opposition groups, both internal and exiled, began organizing to demand the opening up of political space and greater civil liberties. Internal pressure was supported by international actors who were demanding political reforms to jumpstart economic reforms. Winds of democracy blowing in the region and the world also added to the impetus for change in Ghana.

The initial transition was flawed, as the government handed over power to itself, and the opposition boycotted the elections leading to a de facto one-party parliament. Nonetheless there were positive changes which increased the chances that democracy could grow, including constitutional provisions protecting media and political party activity.

Ghana has continued to make democratic progress. Reforms have made elections more transparent, cleaner and competitive. Alternation of power in 2000 and successful elections in 2004 are manifestations of democratic growth.

Civil society has grown and its level of engagement in national life and governance has increased. The airwaves were liberalized in 1996 and the print media have proliferated. Democracy-building institutions such as the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice have become more active, including investigating allegations against the President; the Electoral Commission is highly regarded in the region and provides assistance to other countries.

Past Human Rights violations have been dealt with without retribution, holding hearings and recommending institutional reforms. Government responsiveness and accessibility have improved markedly and democratic culture has grown steadily.

Challenges remain, including corruption and deficits in political party development and accountability. Parliament's independence must be strengthened. Ethnicity and tribalism continue to pose problems. Public service reform is slow, youth unemployment high, and poverty levels unacceptable.

In general, however, a renaissance of sorts seems to be occurring in Ghana. International confidence in the country has grown and outside investment is rising. Ghanians remain positive about their democratic experiment.

# Warsaw Declaration: Toward a Community of Democracies

**Warsaw, Poland, June 27, 2000**

We the participants from:

Republic of Albania, People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, Argentine Republic, Republic of Armenia, Australia, Republic of Austria, Azerbaijani Republic, People's Republic of Bangladesh, Kingdom of Belgium, Belize, Republic of Benin, Republic of Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republic of Botswana, Federative Republic of Brazil, Republic of Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Canada, Republic of Cape Verde, Republic of Chile, Republic of Colombia, Republic of Costa Rica, Republic of Croatia, Republic of Cyprus, Czech Republic, Kingdom of Denmark, Commonwealth of Dominica, Dominican Republic, Republic of Ecuador, Arab Republic of Egypt, Republic of El Salvador, Republic of Estonia, Republic of Finland, Georgia, Federal Republic of Germany, Republic of Guatemala, Republic of Haiti, Hellenic Republic, Republic of Hungary, Republic of Iceland, Republic of India, Republic of Indonesia, Ireland, State of Israel, Italian Republic, Japan, Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Republic of Kenya, Republic of Korea, State of Kuwait, Republic of Latvia, Kingdom of Lesotho, Principality of Liechtenstein, Republic of Lithuania, Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Republic of Madagascar, Republic of Malawi, Republic of Mali, Republic of Malta, Republic of Mauritius, Mexico, Republic of Moldova, Principality of Monaco, Mongolia, Kingdom of Morocco, Republic of Mozambique, Republic of Namibia, Kingdom of Nepal, Kingdom of the Netherlands, New Zealand, Republic of Nicaragua, Republic of the Niger, Federal Republic of Nigeria, Kingdom of Norway, Republic of Panama, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Paraguay, Republic of Peru, Republic of the Philippines, Republic of Poland, Portuguese Republic, State of Qatar, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe, Republic of Senegal, Republic of Seychelles, Slovak Republic, Republic of Slovenia, Republic of South Africa, Kingdom of Spain, Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, Kingdom of Sweden, Swiss Confederation, United Republic of Tanzania, Kingdom of Thailand, Republic of Tunisia, Republic of Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Eastern Republic of Uruguay, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Republic of Yemen, in the Community of Democracies Ministerial Meeting convened in Warsaw, 26-27 June 2000:

**Expressing** our common adherence to the purposes and principles set forth in the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,

**Reaffirming** our commitment to respect relevant instruments of international law,

**Emphasizing** the interdependence between peace, development, human rights and democracy,

**Recognizing** the universality of democratic values,

**Hereby agree** to respect and uphold the following core democratic principles and practices:

- **The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government, as expressed by exercise of the right and civic duties of citizens to choose their representatives through regular, free and fair elections with universal and equal suffrage, open to multiple parties, conducted by secret ballot, monitored by independent electoral authorities, and free of fraud and intimidation.**
- **The right of every person to equal access to public service and to take part in the conduct of public affairs, directly or through freely chosen representatives.**
- **The right of every person to equal protection of the law, without any discrimination as to race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.**
- **The right of every person to freedom of opinion and of expression, including to exchange and receive ideas and information through any media, regardless of frontiers.**
- **The right of every person to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.**
- **The right of every person to equal access to education.**
- **The right of the press to collect, report and disseminate information, news and opinions, subject only to restrictions necessary in a democratic society and prescribed by law, while bearing in mind evolving international practices in this field.**
- **The right of every person to respect for private family life, home, correspondence, including electronic communications, free of arbitrary or unlawful interference.**
- **The right of every person to freedom of peaceful assembly and association, including to establish or join their own political parties, civic groups, trade unions or other organizations with the necessary legal guarantees to allow them to operate freely on a basis of equal treatment before the law.**
- **The right of persons belonging to minorities or disadvantaged groups to equal protection of the law, and the freedom to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practice their own religion, and use their own language.**

- **The right of every person to be free from arbitrary arrest or detention; to be free from torture and other cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment; and to receive due process of law, including to be presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.**
- **That the aforementioned rights, which are essential to full and effective participation in a democratic society, be enforced by a competent, independent and impartial judiciary open to the public, established and protected by law.**
- **That elected leaders uphold the law and function strictly in accordance with the constitution of the country concerned and procedures established by law.**
- **The right of those duly elected to form a government, assume office and fulfill the term of office as legally established.**
- **The obligation of an elected government to refrain from extra-constitutional actions, to allow the holding of periodic elections and to respect their results, and to relinquish power when its legal mandate ends.**
- **That government institutions be transparent, participatory and fully accountable to the citizenry of the country and take steps to combat corruption, which corrodes democracy.**
- **That the legislature be duly elected and transparent and accountable to the people.**
- **That civilian, democratic control over the military be established and preserved.**
- **That all human rights—civil, cultural, economic, political and social—be promoted and protected as set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other relevant human rights instruments.**

The Community of Democracies affirms our determination to work together to promote and strengthen democracy, recognizing that we are at differing stages in our democratic development. We will cooperate to consolidate and strengthen democratic institutions, with due respect for sovereignty and the principle of non-interference in internal affairs. Our goal is to support adherence to common democratic values and standards, as outlined above. To that end, our governments hereby agree to abide by these principles in practice, and to support one another in meeting these objectives which we set for ourselves today.

We will seek to strengthen institutions and processes of democracy. We appreciate the value of exchanging experiences in the consolidation of democracy and identifying best practices. We will promote discussions and, where appropriate, create forums on subjects relevant to democratic governance for the purpose of continuing and deepening our dialogue on democratization. We would focus our deliberations on our

common principles and values rather than extraneous bilateral issues between members. We resolve jointly to cooperate to discourage and resist the threat to democracy posed by the overthrow of constitutionally elected governments. We resolve to strengthen cooperation to face the transnational challenges to democracy, such as state-sponsored, cross-border and other forms of terrorism; organized crime; corruption; drug trafficking; illegal arms trafficking; trafficking in human beings and money laundering, and to do so in accordance with respect for human rights of all persons and for the norms of international law.

We will encourage political leaders to uphold the values of tolerance and compromise that underpin effective democratic systems, and to promote respect for pluralism so as to enable societies to retain their multi-cultural character, and at the same time maintain stability and social cohesion. We reject ethnic and religious hatred, violence and other forms of extremism. We will also promote civil society, including women's organizations, non-governmental organizations, labor and business associations, and independent media in their exercise of their democratic rights. Informed participation by all elements of society, men and women, in a country's economic and political life, including by persons belonging to minority groups, is fundamental to a vibrant and durable democracy. We will help to promote government-to-government and people-to-people linkages and promote civic education and literacy, including education for democracy. In these ways we will strengthen democratic institutions and practices and support the diffusion of democratic norms and values.

We will work with relevant institutions and international organizations, civil society and governments to coordinate support for new and emerging democratic societies.

We recognize the importance our citizens place on the improvement of living conditions. We also recognize the mutually-reinforcing benefits the democratic process offers to achieving sustained economic growth. To that end, we will seek to assist each other in economic and social development, including eradication of poverty, as an essential contributing factor to the promotion and preservation of democratic development.

We will collaborate on democracy-related issues in existing international and regional institutions, forming coalitions and caucuses to support resolutions and other international activities aimed at the promotion of democratic governance. This will help to create an external environment conducive to democratic development.





## Council for a Community of Democracies

**CCD** is a 501 (c) (3) tax-exempt organization incorporated in the District of Columbia where its office is in:

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