

Statement of Principles and Objectives

Strengthening Democracy Abroad: The Role of the National Endowment for Democracy

The National Endowment for Democracy is a U.S. initiative to strengthen democratic institutions throughout the world through private, non-governmental efforts. It is a privately incorporated nonprofit organization with a Board of Directors comprised of leading citizens from the mainstream of American political and civic life - liberals and conservatives, Democrats and Republicans, representatives of business and labor, and others with long international experience. The Endowment embodies a broad, bipartisan U.S. commitment to democracy. It seeks to enlist the energies and talents of private citizens and groups in the United States to work with those abroad who wish to build for themselves a democratic future.

The Endowment's objective of strengthening democratic groups and institutions in other countries not only reflects the hopes and ideals of the American people, but also is rooted in universally recognized principles of international law. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other United Nations agreements (including the Conventions of the International Labor Organization), as well as the Helsinki Final Act, commit governments around the world to honoring the fundamental human rights that are guaranteed to citizens of the United States and other free societies. It is therefore in keeping with established international law for the American people, through an institution such as the National Endowment for Democracy, to help others build democratic institutions and strengthen democratic processes that will promote individual rights and freedoms.

The expansion of private, voluntary initiatives to promote democracy internationally cannot be accomplished through governmental action alone. Indeed, the creation and structure of the Endowment reflect the view that the U.S. private sector is both a more appropriate and a more effective vehicle than government for working with private groups abroad to advance the democratic cause. The flexibility afforded by the Endowment's nongovernmental character gives it a crucial advantage in developing relationships of partnership and cooperation with foreign organizations. As a grant making agency, the Endowment enhances the capabilities of American private-sector groups to assist and encourage their counterparts abroad. As an institutional reference point for the effort to strengthen democracy, it makes possible the kind of sustained and coordinated support that can make a difference over time.

By its very nature such support cannot be governed by the short-term policy preferences of a particular U.S. administration or by the partisan political interests of any party or group. The Endowment keeps the Executive branch fully informed of its programs and solicits the views of relevant U.S. officials in Washington and in embassies abroad. As stated in the National Endowment for Democracy Act (P.L. 98-164), the Endowment is of course also subject to appropriate Congressional oversight and review. But as a private nongovernmental organization it sets its own policies and makes its own decisions.

The Endowment will be effective in carrying out its mission only if it stands apart from immediate policy disputes and represents a consistent, bipartisan, long-term approach to strengthening democracy that will be supported through successive administrations. While the Endowment must also be prepared to provide timely assistance in critical moments to foreign democrats, its decisions must be guided by the urgency of the need in the context of the Endowment's broad democratic objectives, not by the exigencies of government policy or the partisan concerns of a particular political viewpoint.

The Endowment recognizes the importance of ideas in the contemporary world and the need to nourish an intellectual climate in which democracy can grow and flourish. Fundamental to the democratic process is a lively competition among points of view, interest groups and independent institutions. The goal is not to steer other nations toward the adoption of any particular set of policies, but rather to help them evolve into stable and vigorous democratic societies.

The activities supported by the Endowment are guided by the six purposes set forth in the Endowment's Articles of Incorporation and the National Endowment for Democracy Act passed by the United States Congress. These six purposes are:

- to encourage free and democratic institutions throughout the world through private-sector initiatives, including activities which promote the individual rights and freedoms (including internationally recognized human rights) which are essential to the functioning of democratic institutions;
- to facilitate exchanges between United States private-sector groups (especially the two major American political parties, labor, and business) and democratic groups abroad;
- to promote United States nongovernmental participation (especially through the two major American political parties, labor, business, and other private-sector groups) in democratic training programs and democratic institution-building abroad;
- to strengthen democratic electoral processes abroad through timely measures in cooperation with indigenous democratic forces;
- to support the participation of the two major American political parties, labor, business, and other United States private-sector groups in fostering cooperation with those abroad dedicated to the cultural values, institutions and organizations of democratic pluralism; and
- to encourage the establishment and growth of democratic development in a manner consistent both with the broad concerns of United States national interests and with the specific requirements of the democratic groups in other countries which are aided by programs funded by the Endowment.

In all its efforts to implement these purposes, the Endowment is guided by the following principles:

- that democracy involves the right of the people freely to determine their own destiny;
- that the exercise of this right requires a system that guarantees freedom of expression, belief and association, free and competitive elections, respect for the inalienable rights of individuals and minorities, free communications media, and the rule of law;
- that a democratic system may take a variety of forms suited to local needs and traditions, and therefore need not follow the U.S. or any other particular model;
- that the existence of autonomous economic, political, social and cultural institutions is the foundation of the democratic process and the best guarantor of individual rights and freedoms;
- that private institutions in free societies can contribute to the development of democracy through assistance to counterparts abroad;
- that such assistance must be responsive to local needs and seek to encourage - but not to control - indigenous efforts to build free and independent institutions; and
- that the partnership between those who enjoy the benefits of democracy and those who aspire to a democratic future must be based upon mutual respect, shared values, and a common commitment to work together to extend the frontiers of democracy for present and future generations.

The Endowment's programs are devoted to encouraging democratic political development. It generally does not fund projects aimed primarily at promoting economic and social development, for which substantial resources are provided by many other agencies, both governmental and private. Nonetheless, the

Endowment recognizes the interdependence of sound economic development and real democracy, and is in full sympathy with the struggle of people throughout the world to overcome poverty and to achieve social and economic advancement. Indeed, we believe that political democracy is vital to the success of this struggle. It is a means whereby society can resolve social conflicts without debilitating violence and adjust peacefully to ever changing conditions. It allows each individual the opportunity to realize his or her full potential and thereby contribute to the enrichment of society itself. And it ensures that government, in deriving its authority from the people, will be responsive to their needs. Only through democracy can all people, the poor included, genuinely participate in the decisions that will affect their lives and well-being.

The programs supported by the Endowment not only have to take account of cultural and economic diversity, but must also be suited to the particular state of democratic development that obtains in different countries. In countries where democracy exists but is not securely established, the task is to enhance the credibility and efficiency of democratic governance and to strengthen the private-sector institutional and cultural framework. Where countries are in transition to democracy, it is the process of transition itself that should be assisted by measures to broaden confidence in the democratic process and to reinforce groups committed to democracy.

In countries where political democracy can only be a long-term goal, the Endowment concentrates on helping to build such institutions as independent business organizations, free trade unions, a free press, and an independent judiciary. In societies where even these independent institutions are prohibited or severely restricted, the immediate objective is to enlarge whatever possibilities exist for independent thought, expression, and cultural activity.

While the Endowment will concentrate the major part of its resources on situations that offer a realistic prospect for achieving progress toward democracy, it will not neglect those who keep alive the flame of freedom in closed societies.

The Endowment ordinarily funds programs on an annual basis. Some projects will be of a short-term nature, but because democratic development is a long-term process, some programs may require more extended assistance. In all circumstances, the Endowment will encourage efforts by its grantees to seek other sources of funding.

Many groups the Endowment will wish to support function under difficult conditions and may not be able to develop alternative funding. Such groups may face the additional challenge of well-funded antidemocratic rivals. In deciding whether to renew support, the Endowment will weigh such factors as a grantee's success in achieving what was intended with the initial support, the importance of its activities to the overall democratic effort in the country or region, and the value of continuing these activities in relation to the Endowment's overall priorities, including its wish to help worthwhile new initiatives to get underway.

The Endowment funds programs in five substantive areas: pluralism; democratic governance and political processes; education, culture and communications; research; and international cooperation. Encouraging the development abroad of strong, independent private-sector organizations - especially trade unions and business associations - is one of the Endowment's top priorities. Of comparable importance are non-partisan efforts to strengthen the political institutions and processes of unstable or newly emerging democracies. A third program category to which the Endowment devotes a significant portion of its resources is the area of education, culture and communications. Research and international cooperation receive much more modest funding, but are nonetheless important to the Endowment's overall program. The following pages provide a discussion of these five program areas:

I. PLURALISM

An essential precondition of democracy is the existence of a variety of independent organized groups representing diverse interests. The authors of *The Federalist* argued that competition among a "multiplicity

of interests" was both the very heart of democratic politics and the best security for the rights of individuals and minorities. Exercise of the basic right of freedom of association, recognized both in our own First Amendment and in many international agreements, enables individuals with common interests to combine into strong and independent organizations that can represent the views and protect the rights of their members. Where this kind of pluralism is allowed to flourish, it is likely that undemocratic political systems ultimately will have to accommodate to a process of free and fair competition for power. And in functioning democracies, vigorous private, voluntary institutions present powerful obstacles to unwarranted extensions of governmental authority. Moreover, these organizations serve as "schools of democracy," accustoming their members to the free discussion, accommodation of differing views, and respect for procedural rules that are intrinsic to democratic politics.

Trade Unions. Free and independent trade unions play an indispensable role in the process of democratization. In addition to protecting the job-related rights of individual workers, unions represent an organized force for representing the interests of common people in the political, economic, and social life of a country. By giving democratic representation to working people and ensuring their inclusion in the processes by which decisions are made and power is distributed, unions help developing societies avoid the kind of sharp polarization that feeds political extremism and allows anti-democratic groups to exploit worker grievances. Unions also represent a major hope for the peaceful democratization of totalitarian societies. Independent trade unions thus constitute a fundamental part of the Endowment's effort to promote democracy.

Programs in this area, funded through the Solidarity Center of the AFL-CIO, seek to promote:

- **Institution Building.** Assistance is given to national trade union centers and the international trade secretariats for strengthening the infrastructure of trade unions. At times, support is channeled through regional trade union groups and international labor organizations such as the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU).
- **Exchanges.** Since the labor movement is built upon the principle of solidarity, an important part of any union building program is exchanges which strengthen international bonds among free trade unionists. Such exchange programs are tied to other programs, especially comprehensive training, conferences, and education seminars.
- **Training and Civic Education.** Programs in this area include training in the techniques of organization, servicing members, producing and disseminating written materials, and organizing public demonstrations and rallies. Educational programs also train union leaders and members in parliamentary procedures and internal democracy, as well as in the philosophy of free trade unions.
- **Electoral Processes.** An important goal of unions is to strengthen the democratic process in the society at large and ensure that the political system is responsive to the interest of workers. Toward that end, programs train union members in political skill including registration and get-out-the-vote efforts, communicating with other union members to increase political participation, and communicating union views to the general electorate.
- **Democratic Pluralism.** In order to encourage the growth of pluralism, programs are undertaken to assist free union movements in nondemocratic societies. Pluralism is also promoted through research and publications that emphasize the importance of democratic values to the existence of free trade unions and provide information about efforts by antidemocratic groups to subvert unions.

Business. Independent associations representing the views of the business community are an essential component of a pluralistic society. But the role of the business organization is merely one dimension of the importance of an open economy to democracy. The experience of recent decades has confirmed that an open market economy is a prerequisite of a democratic political system. A dynamic private sector with an active small business community can supply a counter-weight that effectively limits state power and enables democracy to thrive. The private sector can remain healthy and independent only if it is genuinely free, which is to say, not beholden to a government that controls all the economic resources of society. Moreover, a market economy provides significant protection for political dissent: individuals who oppose government policy are not in danger of losing their livelihoods as they would be in a fully collectivized economy.

Through the Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE) of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the Endowment fosters the development of the open market private enterprise system and stimulates the growth of independent business institutions as a means of encouraging the development of democratic pluralism abroad. Programs funded through CIPE seek to:

- promote participation of the private sector in democratic political and policy processes;
- increase public understanding and appreciation of the role of the entrepreneur in economic growth;
- stimulate public/private sector dialogue and encourage structural reform to guarantee economic and political rights;
- supply legislators and other economic decision makers with the data needed to insure informed deliberations and effective legislation;
- expand the teaching of private enterprise and enhance the capacity of business communications to reach such audiences as the media, political leaders, employees and youth; and
- encourage development of voluntary business associations which promote private enterprise concepts and take a leadership role with respect to economic change.

Other Private Sector Institutions. Civic and social organizations are also eligible for Endowment assistance. These institutions can play an important role not only in developing organizational skills and democratic attitudes among their members, but also in bolstering the civic consciousness of the wider society to which they belong. The Endowment is especially interested in aiding the work of organizations dedicated to promoting political participation of women, youth and ethnic minorities. In keeping with the view that inclusiveness and acceptance of pluralism are essential elements of democratic society, the Endowment will also support organizations working to resolve conflict and promote dialogue among diverse ethnic and national groups.

Finally, the Endowment may extend assistance to organizations whose aim is the protection of human rights, the promotion of religious tolerance, or the defense of victims of persecution. While democracy and human rights are not identical objectives, they reinforce each other: human rights groups protect democratic activists and expand the political space available to them; and democracy is the best guarantee for the respect of human rights.

II. DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE POLITICAL PROCESSES

Democracy requires a system of representative government in which leaders are chosen in freely contested fair and periodic elections, and the rights of individuals and groups are assured through the just and equitable rule of law. The Endowment seeks to strengthen that system in countries where democracy is

newly established, fragile, or under challenge from anti-democratic forces of the left or right. The Endowment also seeks to facilitate and encourage a transition to democracy where there are opportunities for such a positive evolution. And even in non-democratic countries, it may be possible for the Endowment to work with independent and even certain official institutions (e.g., an independent judiciary) whose strengthening may facilitate an eventual emergence of democratic rule.

In its efforts to promote democratic governance and political processes, the Endowment, through the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI), the International Republican Institute (IRI), and other groups, supports programs in the following areas:

Political Parties. A precondition for democracy is a multiparty system that allows free competition among different political parties representing diverse interest and viewpoints. Political parties that are weak, incoherent and unable to aggregate and articulate popular interests frequently become the vehicles of individual or narrow interests, and are easily dominated by military or state bureaucracy. Stable democracy, therefore, requires the development of strong, broadly-based and well-organized political parties, support for which is provided by the Endowment through NDI and IRI. The Endowment is especially interested in non-partisan programs which seek to promote democratic values and political capabilities among all parties in the democratic spectrum. It will not pick and choose among the democratic competitors in countries where such competition is possible or among democratic parties where they are excluded from political competition, but rather concentrates on strengthening the organizational skills and democratic convictions of all parties committed to the values of democracy. NDI and IRI provide infrastructure support and training in areas such as party organization, grassroots membership recruitment and message development. No Endowment funds, however, may be used to finance the campaigns of candidates for public office.

Election Participation and Administration. The Endowment also seeks to promote well organized and administered elections that ensure fair competition and thus encourage the acceptance of the results by the electorate. The Endowment supports programs that provide sound technical assistance in the design and administration of election systems, as well as efforts to increase voter registration and education, the training of poll watchers, and other programs that stimulate participation and enhance the legitimacy of the democratic electoral process. The Endowment provides technical assistance and support for civic and voter education programs designed to instill confidence in and an understanding of the electoral process, as well as technical assistance in drafting electoral law and informing the electorate about its rights and obligations. Support is also given for the organization of international election observer missions which help to deter misconduct, bolster confidence in electoral processes, and promote greater understanding and appreciation for international standards of free and fair elections.

Public Policy and Information. The emergence of public policy institutes in the United States and other Western democracies is serving as a model in developing and formerly communist nations. Independent and generally non-partisan centers for research and the development of alternative solutions to national problems have been established even in nondemocratic countries, where they can serve as forums for dialogue among the various political, economic and social forces. The Endowment is interested in assisting institutions of this kind, and will consider supporting programs that make informational resources available to public officials, in particular to legislative bodies.

Strengthening Legislatures. Democracy suffers when a legislative system is weak, or when government institutions do not interrelate. Through programs such as parliamentary training, the Endowment supports efforts to improve the quality of representative institutions such as national legislatures and municipal councils.

The Rule of Law and the Administration of Justice. The fair and equitable rule of law is the foundation of a democratic system. It limits the authority of the state, protects the rights of individuals and groups, and makes possible the orderly and peaceful governance of society. The Endowment supports programs devoted to legal and judicial education and training, the modernization and increased independence of court

systems, the codification of laws, the writing or reform of constitutions to encourage democratic governance and the rule of law, and other activities which support these objectives.

The Military and Democracy. Democratic control of the armed forces is a precondition for democracy. In many developing countries, the attitude of the military to democracy may be decisive. A military that is committed to a professional as opposed to a political role is a vital asset to any democratic system. Civilian expertise in military affairs is also necessary for the effective oversight of the armed forces. Therefore, the Endowment is interested in program aimed at fostering an increased dialogue between civilian and military leaders and an abiding commitment of the military to a democratic system.

III. EDUCATION, CULTURE and COMMUNICATIONS

A third vitally important aspect of the Endowment's work is in the realm of education, culture and communications. Democratic political institutions will not long endure unless they are buttressed by a strong civic culture and supported by a populace that is committed to such ideals as the rule of law, individual liberty, freedom of religion, free and open debate, majority rule, and protection of the rights of minorities. Nor will the demise of dictatorships give birth to genuine and lasting democracy where the citizenry has not already begun to understand and appreciate democratic values. Moreover, the general prospects for the advance of democracy in the world will depend in large part on the cogency and vigor with which its advocates can defend the case for free societies against their adversaries.

The Endowment's activities in this area include the following kinds of programs:

Support for Independent Newspapers, Journals, and Other Communications Media. The indispensability of a free press to democratic societies argues for an active Endowment effort aimed at encouraging democratically-oriented journalistic enterprises in the emerging democracies. Programs that might be supported include professional training in news gathering and reporting; assistance to journalistic associations and other groups dedicated to promoting and defending freedom of the press; and aid to print and electronic media that serve as forums for free discussion and the advancement of democratic ideas.

Support for Democratic Education. Training in democratic habits and principles is most effective if it begins during youth. Hence the Endowment funds programs aimed at improving civic education in schools, especially efforts to develop more effective democratically-oriented curricula. It will also consider assisting university-based or independent programs of education, research and discussion in situations where institutions devoted to intellectual liberty and the free exchange of ideas are being threatened by anti-democratic forces.

Support for Activities Directed at Strengthening Popular Understanding and Intellectual Advocacy of Democracy. The dissemination of books, films or television programs illuminating or advocating democracy is an activity deserving consideration for support. So are efforts to promote associations among pro-democratic intellectuals, writers, scientists and artists. Such contacts not only contribute to an enrichment and refinement of democratic ideas, but enhance the self-confidence and determination of advocates of freedom everywhere.

Efforts in the realm of culture and opinion assume special importance in closed societies, where other levers for promoting progress toward democracy are not available. The first and most essential step toward the opening of closed societies is the encouragement and sustenance of a degree of independent public opinion. Toward this end it is necessary to promote a freer flow of information to and from the people of such countries. This can be done both by making available outside sources of information and ideas and by assisting in the publication and dissemination of independent scholarly or artistic works produced within.

It is also important that worthy products of the unofficial (or "second") culture of closed societies be widely

recognized in open societies, for the sustainability of an independent public opinion depends in large measure on the resonance and support it receives in free countries. Moreover, recognition abroad tends to provide "underground" scholars and artists, as well as human rights activists and political dissidents, with some Protection against government repression. It is vital that the struggle of these brave people for intellectual liberty and human rights not be ignored, and that they know they have the support of democrats throughout the world. Such support played a crucial role in the opening of previously closed systems in Eastern Europe, and it remains a central element in any effort to democratize countries that remain totalitarian.

The Endowment ordinarily does not provide humanitarian assistance. In certain cases, however, where a state controlling a society's economic resources seeks to crush peaceful dissent or coerce nonviolent opposition through the denial of basic material needs, the democratic objectives of the Endowment may be advanced through the provision of carefully targeted humanitarian aid. Under these circumstances, the Endowment may provide, through appropriate grantee organizations, assistance that will enable individuals or movements peacefully working for democratic ends to maintain themselves and their activities.

IV. RESEARCH/INTERNATIONAL FORUM for DEMOCRACY

Although most of its grants are for support of action oriented programs, the Endowment also takes a keen interest in efforts to strengthen the intellectual underpinnings of democracy. Thus it occasionally makes modest grants for research projects that promise to contribute directly to the promotion of democracy. In addition, it seeks to complement its grants program with other activities (often supported by private funds) aimed at encouraging reflection and discussion about key issues in the struggle for democracy.

The Endowment's quarterly publication, the *Journal of Democracy*, combines scholarly articles on democracy with reports and analyses by leaders of democratic organizations and movements around the world. The *Journal*, which is published for the Endowment by the Johns Hopkins University Press, has an independent Editorial Board composed of distinguished political scientists and leading democratic thinkers. It serves as a forum for serious discussion of the principles and prospects of democracy, and as a source of information and guidance about the problems encountered and the strategies employed by democrats in all regions of the globe.

The Endowment also seeks other ways to develop close ties with the academic and policy research communities. From time to time, it brings together small groups of experts to aid the staff in program planning. It also hosts informal meetings that enable leading democratic activists visiting from abroad to address an influential U.S. audience. The Endowment's biennial conference on the state of democracy in the world is the largest of such gatherings, bringing together an international cross-section of prominent democratic activists and thinkers.

Over time, the Endowment intends to broaden its role as an intellectual as well as a programmatic center of activity. Among other possible initiatives, it hopes to establish a library housing important books and documents on democracy, and to host a fellowship program for democratic activists from abroad.

V. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

An important priority for the Endowment is to encourage regional and international cooperation in the building and strengthening of democracy. Thus the Endowment will consider making grants for programs aimed at promoting greater cohesion among democratic forces. In supporting such coordination among democratic groups, the Endowment attempts to support individuals and groups working to find democratic solutions to ethnic and national conflicts which pose an important danger to democratic development in the

contemporary world. Through such efforts, the Endowment hopes to foster a sense of common identity and purpose among democratic groups and democratic societies generally.

Conclusion

The effort to foster democracy is necessarily a long range project. In most cases, results will not be attained quickly but will require long years of steady, persistent work. Democracy itself is hard work. It is not achieved through a single election or a particular reform, but consists of institutions, habits, procedures, and values that evolve over time and according to the needs and traditions of diverse political cultures. No amount of effort or investment of resources could be successful, however, if the idea of democracy were not intrinsically attractive to ordinary people throughout the world. We believe that the democratic idea has enormous appeal; that, indeed, it is an ideal that billions of people in all parts of the globe revere and aspire to. These people are our partners, or our potential partners. We hope that the Endowment's work will not only help them achieve the blessings of democracy, but will strengthen the bond between them and the people of the United States, a bond based on our common commitment to democracy as a way of life.