

IT HAS NOW BEEN A YEAR SINCE MY COLLEAGUES on the NED Board asked me to take on the role of chairman. I have long respected the Endowment for its bi-partisanship and the seriousness and effectiveness with which it has pursued the mission of advancing democracy. Having served as NED's chairman during the last twelve months has only deepened that respect.

During a period when the democratic process appears to have stalled in so many parts of the world, I have been asked whether I still believe that men and women around the globe continue to aspire to establish their own free and strong institutions of self-government. Without minimizing the obstacles for realizing these aspirations, I have never wavered from my belief that in their hearts all peoples understand that democracy is the only sensible way for people to settle their differences and provide their children with the opportunities to live more peaceful, prosperous lives.

That view has been reinforced after reading through the pages of this annual report. I call to your attention the description of programs the Endowment's grantees have been carrying out in every corner of the globe. You can be assured that behind these succinct descriptions are human stories of courage and sacrifice, of persistence and ingenuity, of the application of sound ideas to the solutions of practical problems. From societies in which the mildest opposition is stifled to new democracies whose leaders look to us for assistance in building strong institutions, NED and our affiliated institutes, the National Democratic Institute (NDI), the International Republican Institute (IRI), the Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE) and the Solidarity Center (ACILS) are providing key support.

This report also reinforces the axiom that democracy

is an incremental process, rarely arriving overnight through a single dramatic event but rather developing over time through effective groundwork laid at the grassroots. Just to offer a few examples of the kinds of programs NED supports in strikingly different countries:

- In Pakistan, where the failure of the public education system to inculcate civic values of tolerance, peace, and respect for the rule of law has contributed to apathy and acceptance of extremist ideology, the Taangh Wasaib Organization has established a human rights education program for teachers and parents in a region that is particularly prone to sectarian violence;
- In Peru, NED is helping The Comision Andina de Juristas develop and implement a strategy of judicial independence and accountability; and
- In North Korea, arguably the world's most repressive regime, NED grantees based in South Korea, including those founded and run by North Korean defectors, are breaking that regime's monopoly of information through shortwave radio broadcasts, CDs, USBs, and magazines written by and for North Koreans.



One aspect of democracy building that has been particularly gratifying has been the solidarity that has enabled the spread of democracy from country to country through so-called "cross-border" work, in which seasoned activists from a country that has made a successful transition to democracy share their expertise with activists in neighboring countries.

This year we celebrated the twentieth anniversary of a series of events that led to the liberation of millions in Central and Eastern Europe. One significant celebration took place in Lviv, Ukraine, sister city to

Wroclaw, Poland, site of a conference in early November, 1989 that Vaclav Havel called a prologue to the Velvet Revolution in Czechoslovakia that began just a few weeks later. That conference, funded by a NED grant that totaled less than ten thousand dollars, was, as Carl Gershman noted in Lviv last summer, both the culmination of over a decade of underground work by dissident activists, and the event that launched this new form of cross-border democracy assistance.

Such assistance, which has flourished throughout the former Soviet Bloc, was highlighted by Vice President Biden last October in Bucharest, Romania, where he told an audience at the Central European Library that, having “delivered on the promise of your revolution, you are now in the position to help others do the same.”

I am very pleased to report that cross-border work has now spread from Eastern Europe to other parts of the world. A good example are the programs carried out by the East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Network which, with Endowment assistance, has developed mechanisms to support and protect defenders across the entire continent.

But what gives me the greatest encouragement is the work that NED is nurturing among young people throughout the world.

- In Ukraine, the think tank Smoloskyp, Inc. is promoting the incorporation of youth into the political process through workshops, seminars, conferences, and the publication *Young Nation*, which has provided a forum for young scholars to publish their work.
- In Iraq, the Iraqi Al-Firdaws Society has brought together youth from both rural and urban areas of Basra—a region which until recently was

plagued by violence and militias and largely neglected by other civil society organizations—to participate in programs on democracy, conflict resolution and the promotion of tolerance.

- Through the World Movement for Democracy, a global network of democratic activists for which NED provides the secretariat, the World Youth Movement for Democracy offers opportunities for young activists to build relationships with each other, to collaborate across borders, to deepen their knowledge on key issues, and to develop practical skills.

The National Endowment for Democracy is privileged to work with men and women throughout the world who, regardless of the challenges they face, are struggling with that same optimistic spirit to bring about a better future for us all.

We are grateful to the Hurford Foundation, whose President Robert Miller sits on the NED Board, for its generous support of this latter initiative.

Finally, I would also highlight once again the inspiring example of five key members of the democratic reform movement in Cuba who were awarded NED’s democracy award last summer. One of the awardees was the Afro-Cuban dissident known as Antunez, a man who in his twenties was imprisoned by the Castro regime for 17 years. Antunez has written, “Peaceful action disarms oppressors in a moral sense.

They may impede some action, but never the spirit or the goal that propels these activities.”

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Richard A. Gephardt
Chairman