

Chapter 2: The International Context

SOLIDARITY

The “venerable practice of international solidarity” has been an important contributing force in the encouragement of democrats and the widening of democratic opportunities for citizens everywhere. In 1989, Vaclav Havel wrote to the International PEN Congress in Montreal which he was not permitted by Czechoslovak authorities to attend in person:

“In today’s world, more and more people are aware of the indivisibility of human fate on this planet, that the problems of anyone of us, or whatever country we come from – be it the smallest and most forgotten – are the problems of us all; that our freedom is indivisible as well, and that we all believe in the same basic values, while sharing common fears about the threats that are hanging over humanity today.”

Globalization has radically altered the context for democratic indivisibility by multiplying awareness through greater ease of communication even within formerly closed or remote societies.

The nation-state remains the most relevant context, however. States sign and hopefully ratify international conventions and organizations affirming the acceptance of human rights. But ultimately these are subject to circumstances, laws, and justice systems within states. Moral philosopher Tzvetan Todorov pointed out in his Oxford Amnesty Lecture that the inhabitants of most countries derive their legal rights much more as citizens of states than as citizens of the world. The Community of Democracies therefore counts as an important objective the strengthening of the capacity of states to assure the rights of its citizens.

Each country experiences in its own way the passage toward the democratic form its citizens choose as most suitable for their own society. But there is one point in common to all such passages: democracy cannot be imported from outside, much less imposed. Reform movements can only emerge from within societies.

Of course, the odds against them can often seem uneven. As US author Robin Wright observed, the contests between “inexperienced democratic activists with limited resources” and regimes “who have no intention of ceding control” can seem an “unfair battle.” While external support and mentoring of skills can help them succeed, outside allies and helpers must always follow the lead of domestic reformers and agents of change. We have seen in Burma/Myanmar and Iran that the crackdowns of security forces willing to use deadly force to support their status quo can obtain more time for an authoritarian regime, but its time will one day run out in favor of justice for the people.

IMPLICATIONS OF AN ERA OF GLOBAL COMMUNICATIONS

In deepening the truth that all democrats are potential partners, the revolution in information technologies and techniques has dramatically altered international reality by providing, at least for those with the necessary means, virtually free access to information from outside – unless local authorities block it.

The globalization of information encourages connections, awareness of norms elsewhere and the comparing of notes on best policies and practices. The young who are increasingly literate are especially connected abroad, and to each other through mobile communications devices.

The cascade of new communications technologies has had a profound impact on events, not all positive. Terrorist and xenophobic groups also mobilize and recruit supporters via new technologies. In Kenya, organized racist messages circulated via cell-phone texts prior to the January, 2008, elections which

broke down along tribal lines. In the struggle between the government and military against “Red Shirt” opposition in Thailand in May 2010, both sides used Twitter to attack the other.

But one does not have to be a “techno-utopian” to recognize the immense benefits of new communications technologies to democracy overall. Western radio and TV broadcasts hastened change in Eastern Europe. Fax machines connected Chinese students to the outside world in 1989. The Internet then became pivotal in rallying widespread participation in civil resistance. In Serbia, Ukraine, South-East Asia, Lebanon, and Venezuela the new tool of text messaging mobilized popular demonstrations. More recently, as in Iran, Twitter and Facebook became key connectors, though the regime tried intermittently to shut the networks down. A prominent example is Egypt’s “Facebook Revolution” in April 2008 that mobilized a general strike and street actions over economic and political issues.

An internationalist culture of “netizens” has emerged. Hand-held communications devices enable them to witness and communicate to the world events as they unfold, in real time. Such “netizens” and bloggers made the whole world the witness of the harshly violent repression of peaceful demonstrations in Burma/Myanmar in 2007. The combination of netizens’ digital cameras and global websites such as YouTube showed the world the tragic killing of Iranian student Neda Agha Soltan on a street in Tehran. Such episodes demonstrate that it is becoming harder and harder for repressive regimes to use brutal force without being exposed.

However, there is every indication they will continue to try. There have been obvious recent high-profile examples of constrained societies adopting defensive moves, especially during periods of agitation or protest through targeted efforts to restrict Internet access and close off sites, and the shutting down of wireless networks.

In China, many foreign news outlet sites or specific news reports are periodically blocked or selectively filtered by “The Great Firewall” created by the Chinese government to keep Internet users from communicating freely with the outside world in an enduring effort to impose a considerable degree of censorship, especially when public protests occur such as in Tibet and Xinjiang.

But such walls have been circumvented with the assistance of supporters of access to information outside. The Global Internet Freedom Consortium generated anti-censorship software, FreeGate, to by-pass the blockage of sites within China itself by accessing rapidly changing servers outside China. FreeGate can be downloaded by Internet users everywhere and was widely used during the shut-down of servers and sites in Iran in 2009. The Chinese Internet Project at the University of California, Berkeley, the international Tor project, and scholars at the Munk Center of the University of Toronto also provide programs that similarly enable Internet users in closed societies to maintain access to outside news outlets, and contacts with the outside world.

But as Prof. Xiao Qiang who heads the Chinese Internet Project has said, “They’re getting more sophisticated. They learn from past mistakes.” The Chinese authorities studied episodes of protest in Eastern Europe and Iran to devise defensive technological intervention techniques, in an attempt to control communications, monitor e-mail, and define public opinion. Sadly, western-based technology companies have exported monitoring software and hardware that enable repressive regimes to take such measures to counter a free Internet.

Moves to limit connectivity have costs. Competitiveness in a digital world in societies such as China or Iran where Internet users are multiplying daily will be greatly hampered by limiting Internet access. A workforce with no Internet access risks isolation. For example, by continuing to try to block Internet access for young people, the Cuban regime will greatly handicap them and Cuba’s future. In any case,

bootleg servers get around the regime's walls.

As technology continues to evolve, the tension between the formidable momentum toward open communication, and repressive governments' wish to control events, will continue. Embassies do have a role to play, sometimes *in extremis* opening mission communications systems to local citizens.

A NEW PARADIGM FOR DIPLOMACY

As a profession, and in practice, diplomacy is undergoing radical change in its opening to public diplomacy, even though, as Ministers Amado and Sikorski point out in the Foreword, "Outdated stereotypes of our profession persist." The International Forum on Diplomatic Training annually brings together heads of diplomatic academies to discuss informally the challenges of transformation. At the 2007 meeting in Maputo, the former president of Mozambique, Dr. Joaquin Chissano, charged diplomats with the responsibility to engage more with civil society organizations. Such essential engagement is often contested in repressive societies. But as a Canadian Ambassador affirms in the case study on Cuba, diplomats today are virtually accredited to the full range of the country.

Once, the conduct of diplomatic relations was strictly on a state-to-state basis, pursued through private exchanges between diplomats and government officials. In recent years diplomacy as practiced by many democratic nations has "gone public" and has taken on more of a human face. For most democracies, the days are past when their embassies were concerned only with maintaining "good relations" with the host government, irrespective of its character, as a former diplomat recalled of his mandate in Burma / Myanmar in the 1980s, when human rights were not high in the hierarchy of embassy priorities. Indeed, bilateral relationships and strategic engagement, even with authoritarian regimes, can be put to use to support the rights of civil society and democracy advocates in the host country.

Today, ambassadors and diplomats are much more likely to emphasize broader and direct engagement with the people of the host countries, and not only government officials. Moreover, diplomatic relations are only one international channel: everywhere, international networks of contacts of NGOs, scholars, researchers, businesspeople, and citizens are forming around issues, interests, and tasks, all facilitated by communications technologies. The working landscape for internationalists and democratic activists is multifaceted. It requires diplomacy to respond – to be, in the words of Ambassador Jiří Gruša at the Maputo meeting of the International Forum, "a tree with many roots."

The Princeton University project, "Forging a World of Liberty Under Law" outlines as a common goal of democracies the support of "Popular, Accountable, and Rights-regarding governments ("PAR")." The approach eschews interference, but advocates that "the best way to help bring governments up to PAR is to connect them and their citizens in as many ways as possible to governments that are already at PAR and provide them with incentives and support to follow suit."

It is in this spirit that in contemporary diplomacy, embassies and consulates become vehicles of public diplomacy and outreach, and brokers promoting contact and communications between the peoples and nongovernmental organizations and groups of both sending and host countries. In addition to encouraging and facilitating some of these connections, embassies are called upon to promote and defend the rights of people to so communicate. They also intervene when necessary to defend and support threatened human rights defenders and democratic activists, either demonstrably in public view, or, as the case merits, privately, below the radar. Consistent messaging on human rights and governance is a central part of the country mission of many democracies, as agreed with authorities at home. A democracy has to be able to demonstrate democratic leadership by example.

The *Handbook* will illustrate the many ways this has happened in the past, including occasions when

authoritarian governments attempted to intimidate or expel diplomats for such legal activity. Repressive governments can and do push back against direct contact between diplomats and civil society. An extreme example occurred in 2009 in Iran where locally-engaged employees of the UK Embassy not enjoying immunity were arrested and put on trial for subversion. It may be that in circumstances where local authorities are seeking to blame outsiders for internal protests whose legitimacy they do not wish to acknowledge, different outreach methods will be required.

In certain circumstances, where the legitimacy of direct support of civil society, especially advocacy groups, is challenged, non-governmental organizations, to which embassies should defer, often take up the slack. NGOs are not cats' paws of embassies or of national interests per se. But they share developmental ideals and have a common interest in civil society's aspirations to democratic governance.

A DIPLOMACY OF COMMITMENT

“Committed diplomacy – going beyond formal duty and applying a humanist perspective – not a legalist or a ‘realist’ one – to international relations is nested in the oldest tradition of that discipline.....The diplomatic field can obtain concrete results, which enable the recognition, assistance, and even the freedom of victims of dictatorial persecution. No diplomat should feel out of bounds when doing so. Quite the opposite.”

- From “On Diplomatic Commitment to Human Rights” by Pablo Brum and Mariana Dambolena, *Documentos*, CADAL (*Centro Para la Apertura y es Desarrollo de América Latina*), May 14, 2009

In vexed circumstances when complications ensue in bilateral relations, it is essential that diplomatic initiative in support of human rights defenders and democratic activists be welcomed and even rewarded by the career culture of foreign ministries. Even in the most difficult and circumscribed circumstances, there is much that a creative and committed diplomat can do, as the following pages will illustrate.

REVOLUTION, REFORM, AND EXTERNAL SUPPORT – CASE STUDIES

There is in practice a “right to be helped” as well as a “right to help.” The role of outsiders is never primary, but their catalytic support can be pivotal.

All Situations are Different

Each country and situation is different, but there are common patterns in how international solidarity benefits extended struggles for human rights and self-determination.

This *Handbook* with its Toolbox and wide portfolio of case studies is meant to be applicable to a wide variety of conditions. Diplomats of democratic governments have different challenges depending on whether they are assisting democrats living under repressive regimes that actively abuse the population, supporting fragile emerging democracies in the process of transition, including in stabilizing post-conflict recovery conditions, or working with recently transformed democracies to consolidate democratic gains.

The country case studies reflect a wide distribution of experience geographically and chronologically. As emphasized earlier, democratic societies flourish on every continent. The case studies are also selected to present an apt variety of transition-types.

The First Edition of the *Handbook* documented peaceful transitions in self-governance, such as in Tanzania. The obligation of democratic solidarity needs to apply to support for a wide array of countries, and civil society, in the difficult process of democratic development and consolidation, and not just to

countries self-nominated by their strategic or other interest.

The *Handbook* presents case studies of successful transitions from repressive societies to democracy, such as in South Africa and Chile. The country case studies focus principally on diplomatic activity to support civil society in-country prior to the end of authoritarian rule. But in such countries where democratic activists had worked to end authoritarian conditions, transitions to democracy were greatly aided by opportunities over the years for them to prepare for democracy through access to programs administered internationally to develop their competence in law, economics, and other key areas of governance. The pertinence of organized civil resistance as an “incubator” of democracy is stated in the Introduction.

The First Edition of the *Handbook* also presented case studies of ongoing situations, such as in Burma/Myanmar and Zimbabwe where repressive regimes are seemingly indifferent to outside counsel, at least from democracies, and where diplomats operate in difficult circumstances of minimal productive communication with host authorities but who continue to be seen by democratic activists in those countries as sources of encouragement and support. These studies, as well as those on Belarus and Ukraine are updated in the Second Edition.

The Second Edition includes additional case studies on China, Cuba, and Egypt, important undemocratic countries facing challenging circumstances, where civil society and democracy activists are narrowly constrained, and where outside influence is officially contested.

The Value of Example in International Solidarity

Influence is often through the power of example. Activists and reformers often seek inspiration from models other societies provide, and take counsel from the comparable prior experiences of other reformers, most of which are relatively recent. After all, the consolidation of effective democratic systems is mostly a phenomenon of the latter half of the 20th Century, spurred by the aftermath of World War II, decolonization, the end of dictatorships in Greece, Portugal, and Spain in the mid-1970s and, more recently, the end of Cold War competition.

The examples of nonviolent conflict developed in the Indian independence movement and the US civil rights movement have provided strategic and tactical inspiration to hundreds of millions of aspiring democrats. More recently, the experience of the *Solidarność* (“Solidarity”) movement in Poland had immense influence beyond its region. Institutional example can be passed on, such as the Chilean effort to construct a Truth and Reconciliation Commission, whose model lent itself later to adaptations in Peru, South Africa, Rwanda, and Morocco as well as in other post-authoritarian and post-conflict locales. Civil society’s response to threats to the integrity of election processes also takes instructive cues from those who experienced similar attempts elsewhere – an example being the learning process of Ukrainian democrats with transition veterans from other European countries such as Serbia and Slovakia.

Internal, domestic actions which were decisive in these and other struggles for democracy – the demonstrations, boycotts, and other forms of non-violent civil resistance – drew from a supportive external framework of psychological, political, and practical measures which circumscribed the options of non-democratic governments.

Positions taken internationally by outside democratic governments and prestigious individuals can be crucial. In Chile, external support to civil society began with humanitarian action offering asylum to thousands of refugees after the *coup d’etat* of September 11, 1973. For the next 15 years, the resulting diaspora of Chilean exiles kept the repressive political condition of Chile high in the consciousness of democrats everywhere.

In consequence, trade union movements in Europe and North America, political parties, such as European social and Christian democrats, and individual political leaders such as German Chancellor Kohl or Senator Edward Kennedy provided Chilean citizens with confidence that they were not alone in the struggle which began to build up against the Pinochet dictatorship's repression. Activists in South Africa recall the inspiration provided by Senator Robert Kennedy's speech in South Africa in 1968 which was preciously preserved on forbidden long-playing records.

Not taking a position in support of democratic activists or reformers can also be negatively crucial. As the President of Venezuela Carlos Andrés Pérez once said, non-response can be a form of intervention.

Repressive regimes also study prior examples.

Authoritarian regimes do try to claim legitimacy by pointing to support from countries reliant on them for security or other interests. As noted above, it is usual for democratic governments and their representatives to condition state-to-state cooperation (except humanitarian aid) on the modification of behavior. But it is vital for democratic governments to do more than episode-by-episode protest of human rights violations. They need to maintain sustained programs of democratic development support, including insisting on ongoing dialogues with the host countries to deal with basic conditions, and especially those affecting civil society. Even many authoritarian regimes feel obliged to feign some reformist intentions. These can provide democratic activists and reformers with potentially valuable openings and opportunities.

However, once it is clear that engagement with host country authorities will be unproductive, or when a regime resorts to deadly force to try to preserve the authoritarian status quo, human rights dialogues can be counter-productive.

It is important then that democracies make their positions clear to offset claims of international support by repressive regimes abusing their populations. A powerful method is coordinated international action for targeted sanctions such as the embargo on petroleum products and arms on the South African apartheid regime. Coordinated sanctions also made South African finances unsustainable, especially in regard to the expenses of equipping for war with front-line states. In this case, the crucial factor was that external sanctions were demanded by South African anti-apartheid movements, the ANC and UDF. A vital question today is the extent to which international solidarity is available: if rich petro-states or others unsympathetic to democracy counter sanctions with their own economic aid, the effect is weakened.

Sanctions can also be controversial because they can hurt the innocent in an oppressed society unless carefully targeted on the accounts, assets, and international mobility of oppressors themselves. The US sanctions and embargo on Cuba is held up by many as being more punitive than remedial. An example of targeted sanctions are reinforced European Union measures against members of the Burmese judiciary responsible for the legal persecution of opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi, and against state-run enterprises and the key personnel of the ruling junta.

Sustaining International Support for Civil Society

The importance of civil society in forming the basic building blocks of democratic governance cannot be overstated. The encouragement and assistance of links forged with civil society outside were instrumental in the formation of broad-based coalitions of activists and reformers in such struggles as Chile or South Africa.

Civil society's emergence can be based on a wide range of groups that may not have explicit political goals. In South Africa, many ANC organizers had their first experience of the dynamics of an autonomous

group in setting up football clubs. Local groups formed from the full spectrum of social activity including issues of women's and youth rights, ecological protection, a free press, culture and performance, home or land owners' rights, and professions such as law or architecture, represent essential human capital. They benefit from the support of the extensive international networks of foundations, agencies, and organizations in democratic countries with a mandate to promote contact and democracy development across borders. Helping them make the connections is an essential task of the new democratic diplomacy.

Authoritarian regimes are increasingly limiting space for civil society to operate and often ban outside financial and other assistance for civil society from foreign governments. Indeed, rulers such as Vladimir Putin attempt to portray reformers as being in the pay of foreign embassies. Cuba has made it a criminal act to accept such financial support. In an extreme example, the prosecution in recent show trials of reformers in Tehran charged the accused with being "arms of the velvet revolution... the women's movement, the human rights movement, the labor-syndicate movement, non-governmental organizations and civil-ethnic movements." In effect, the prosecutor was indicting the Iranian people.

But such paranoid circumstances can make direct embassy and other external financial support, however modest, risky for local civil society, and especially for the recipients. Indirect extension of support through international advocacy groups and organizations may in some circumstances offer apt alternatives for all concerned. Such NGOs do often receive democratic government financing under growing democracy support programs, but their independent operation in the field should demonstrably be at arms' length to government, which in any case often enhances their credibility and effectiveness.

Democracy-building and the pursuit of human rights are secular political issues for the vast majority of activists. However, there is a long history of faith-based groups assuming active roles. The Roman Catholic Church played a central ethical and practical role in comforting opponents of the dictatorship in Poland, Chile and the Philippines. The martyrdoms of Archbishop Oscar Romero in El Salvador, and of the Maryknoll sisters, have inspired countless Salvadorans and democrats everywhere. Buddhist monks' are at the forefront of opposition to dictatorial rule in Burma / Myanmar, and in support of human rights in Tibet today. The Muslim Brotherhood in its various forms has effectively challenged authoritarian rule in countries in the Middle East. In Cuba, religious communities draw social partnership and development support from related congregations outside.

It is not surprising that the sense of values at the core of democracy support in foreign policy has also helped enlist the support of faith-based groups in promoting human rights abroad. Particularly noteworthy was the expulsion of the South African Dutch Reformed Church from the World Alliance of Reformed Churches which deepened the sense of isolation felt by those parts of the public on whose support the apartheid regime relied.

Church groups are at the forefront of advocacy for development assistance as well, and many support faith-based NGOs such as World Vision, Caritas, or Catholic Relief Services. The San Egedio Foundation is an example of a faith-based group dedicated to the mediation and peaceful settlement of disputes.

ELECTIONS

Although there is much more to democracy than free and fair elections, the right of people to freely choose their representatives in government is a basic requirement of democracy.

International agencies help and advise in the technical organization and administration of elections, as well as the elaboration of electoral laws. Several development assistance programs support projects designed to assist and engage greater public understanding of how citizens benefit from and participate in the electoral process.

Such regional or inter-regional organizations as the European Union, the Council of Europe, the OSCE, the OAS, or the Commonwealth of Nations, formally prescribe democratic practice as a pre-condition of membership, and monitor and verify elections as free and fair or not. However, some OSCE members pay only lip service to democratic practice and even contest the organization's prerogatives to verify their elections, some of which have not been judged free and fair.

An example of international cooperation in election support was the ASEAN-led "Friends" of Cambodia exercise before, during, and after the first Cambodian-run multi-party elections in 1998, including the establishment and counseling of an inaugural National Election Commission. Indonesia and the Philippines headed a multi-nation group and with prominent Japanese involvement, brokered talks to permit all political leaders in exile to return to participate. The elections resulted in a hung Parliament and diplomats encouraged and helped King Sihanouk then broker a negotiated and stable political outcome (that unfortunately did not progress to full democratic transition).

When elections are at risk of being manipulated, a full range of international contacts and experience in mobilizing civil society can come into play. Ongoing NGO contacts had a key role in electoral crisis management such as occurred in Ukraine in 2004, or earlier in Slovakia, Croatia, Serbia, and Georgia, and later in Kyrgyzstan. The success in redeeming the 2004 election's integrity in Ukraine was due to the democratic and reform movements' mass protests and pressures, but sustained international support over time from governments, embassies, and people-to-people NGOs played an important background role, as the *Handbook* case-study on Ukraine will demonstrate. The fact that the 2009 presidential election has been widely judged fair and free is an encouraging sign of institutionalized behavioral change.

The 2008 presidential elections in both Kenya and Zimbabwe have been especially challenging. The Kenyan experience shows the importance of helping emerging democracies to do more than mimic election management techniques: human rights need to be embedded in practice and in law so that winning partisan or ethnic majorities do not suppress minority losers. Effective mechanisms for mediation of conflicts are needed to ensure post-election stability. Office-holders need to habituate themselves to the competition of those who legitimately oppose them, which does run against the grain of custom in many societies.

When elections take place in thoroughly non-transparent conditions, as in Iran's presidential election in June, 2009, where there is no independent electoral commission, nor foreign observers, and where opposition representatives were pushed away from scrutiny of the transport and opening of ballot boxes and the counting of ballots, a regime pays an enormous price in international credibility. But the costs internally run even deeper. Ultimately, regimes without demonstrable, verifiable, public support through a legitimate and transparent electoral process will be contested and will fall.

DEMOCRATIC TRANSITION

As noted earlier, holding elections represents only one of many starting points for democracy. In some cases, election winners once in power are tempted to limit democracy or slide back toward outright autocracy. "One person, one vote, one time" was a slogan skeptical of democracy in South Africa, and has been used to deny office to the Muslim Brotherhood in more than one Arab country.

Sadly, the slogan has described a real tendency elsewhere. Elections are abandoned or become rigged in order to preserve power, with a deeply corrosive effect on public morale which can endure for many years. Publics whose protests had led to the introduction of democratic reform can re-ignite when the outcomes slide back into authoritarianism as in Kyrgyzstan or are overturned by the military as in Thailand.

Dictatorship is seldom only about one-man rule. As Morgan Tsvangirai has pointed out when he was opposition leader in Zimbabwe, a political culture of abuse and corruption can outlive any specific authoritarian leader, as beneficiaries seek to consolidate and perpetuate their dominance. The security apparatus and other elites that repressive leaders install to maintain order and their own power acquire vested interests against change, and often become the real powers behind authoritarian government.

There are multiple examples of nonviolent transitions being enabled by the negotiation of exit strategies for authoritarian leaders having to cede power, as in April, 2010 when ousted Kyrgyz president Kurmanbek Bakiyev fled to Minsk in an arrangement brokered with Belarus by the presidents of the US, Russia, and Kazakhstan (although communitarian violence and division remain major challenges).

There is a dual time-frame to democracy development: the short-term challenges and opportunities of winning the right to free elections, and the longer haul of democratic consolidation which requires democratic support to continue long after the first elections are held.

Unfortunately, the attention of too many democratic donor countries tends to flag once sufficiently free and fair elections have been held. There is a “legitimacy moment” when a new democracy needs immediate international support. Yet, it is only at this point that the really hard chore of transparent and accountable self-government begins. The behavioral difficulties of transiting from a totalitarian society to a democratic one became abundantly clear in the republics of the former USSR. Developmental and governance support are interdependent and need to be sustained.

Most fledgling democracies do not need to confront armed counter-revolution that contests the transition to democracy, although as former Mayor of St. Petersburg, the late Anatoly Sobchak said at the time of the attempted Russian *putsch* in 1991, for a while “democracy and dictatorship are living side by side.” In 1996, Sierra Leone managed fair and successful elections despite the efforts by a rebel rejectionist army to block them. However, the development assistance needed to consolidate the fragile democracy was not forthcoming even though resident ambassadors of potential donor democracies tried to persuade their capitals of its importance and urgency. The initial democratic experiment under President Kabbah fell within a few short years to the armed rebels bent on seizing power. (Progress toward democracy has since been restored).

New and fragile democracies need sustained assistance. The establishment of the International Centre for Democratic Transition in Budapest, endorsed by the Community of Democracies at its Biennial Conference in Santiago in 2005, was designed to aggregate 20 years of efforts by the international community to support democratic societies by offering to aspiring democracy activists the experiences of successful transitions, and to help those in transition consolidate their gains. Over those 20 years, errors of foresight and misplaced emphasis abound, but lessons are available.

For the Community of Democracies, what is clear, as Fareed Zakaria has warned, is that the “long, hard slog” of democratic consolidation means that donor and partner democracies must accept “constant engagement, aid, multilateral efforts and a world not of black and white, but of grey.”

The citizens of the new democracies are the ones who will bring clarity and definition to their society. External support plays a secondary role in helping to provide them with the greater capacity and means their development process requires. Of course, again, its design is to support their self-empowerment to choose their own government representatives and policy goals. As President Salvador Allende predicted for Chile, it is the people who make history. It is then up to them to perform what Foreign Minister Sikorski refers to as the “audit function” of elected government, through vibrant participatory and representative democracy, buttressed by free and responsible media. But all this requires mentoring and

support.

We can see that successful democratic transition has been realized on every continent. No people anywhere should be judged as incapable or ineligible for ultimately settling their own destiny, nor judged as “not ready” as has happened in Hong Kong, or has been falsely claimed by some officials in Russia to justify the subtraction of newly-hewn democracy in that country over the last decade.

Ten Features of Successful Democratic Transition.

To sum up, and drawing from the *Handbook's* ongoing consultative process and workshops on how diplomats can best support democracy development, some basic, if somewhat self-evident, conclusions can be adduced about the process of democratic transition.

1. What happens in a country emerges from its own citizens, not from outside. As Freedom House has put it, “The men and women of each country are really the authors of their own democratic development.” Change cannot be imported or exported.
2. There is no single model or template for democratic development. Each trajectory is different, depending on traditions and states of readiness.
3. The building blocks of change are in civil society. Civil society necessarily forms a broad tent that includes citizens organized for any peaceful civil purpose. As Alexis de Tocqueville put it, “civil society makes citizens” and also places a limit on the scope and power of government itself.
4. Organic and durable change is usually bottom-up, rarely elite-driven, and is often generated by functional causes and socially or culturally-oriented groups with practical and non-political aims.
5. Successful transition relies on behavior. It is not a process to be downloaded or transferred.
6. Democracy thus has to be learned and over time. It helps if the new government makes a determined effort to instill a democratic education through education. It is essential for established democracies to keep chronological perspective and humility about comparisons.
7. Free and fair elections constitute only one of many starting points. Equally decisive for representative electoral democracy is the acceptance of the transfer of power, with respect for inclusivity of minorities.
8. Violence is rarely effective as a force for change, as repressive governments have a near-monopoly on instruments of violence, and the risk of violence alienates many citizens from campaigns in favor of change. But nonviolent civil disobedience has historically been an important determinant of the course of events, as well as an essential preparation for post-transition responsibilities.
9. Democracy needs security – and needs to ensure it. In the hierarchy of needs, safety always predominates.
10. To sustain popular acceptance, democracy must deliver beneficial outcomes – transparency, fairness, justice, and adequately-shared economic progress.

COMMITTED DIPLOMATS WORKING TOGETHER

It is also self-evident that the effectiveness of democratic development support is enhanced when democratic partners work together.

Individual and sometimes concerted action – representation on human rights, or activity in support of democratic development – is what the Community of Democracies members’ diplomatic missions can aspire to achieve on the ground. The succeeding Chapter on Toolbox applications is meant to spell out the ways such individual and coordinated efforts have succeeded, or not, in the past.