

ISD REPORT

January 2002

Sustaining Global Democratization: Priority Task Now More Than Ever

INTRODUCTION

— Elizabeth Spiro Clark

October 1, Mayor Rudy Guiliani told the UN Special Session on Terrorism “The best long term deterrent to terrorism . . . is the spread of our principles of freedom, democracy, the rule of law, and respect for human life. The more that spreads around the globe, the safer we will all be. These are very powerful ideas and once they gain a foothold, they cannot be stopped.” This forum on sustaining global democratization was planned well before September 11. However, the premise of our discussion is that the spread of democracy is now more important than ever in building a safe world.

It is no longer prudent foreign policy—if it ever was—to ignore small unimportant states that may have appeared to be outside the area of U.S. interests. Failed states incubate terrorism.

The nature of global security threats has changed in other ways also. Terrorism is transnational. It is not deterred by threats of retaliation. Methods of deterrence therefore will shift to the methods of prevention. High on the list of these methods is democratization. Although democracy is a goal to be pursued as an end, it also contributes to other goals, including preventing the conditions that foster terrorism. It is not naive in planning for a post-Taliban Afghanistan to look at moving towards democratic institutions. The U.S. recognizes the importance

of the political track in Afghanistan, among other reasons because part of our weapons arsenal is the projection of democratic values.

If the best defense of democracy is the spread of democracy then it is important to get to work—in the short term—to sustain democracy where it exists and help democrats prevail where it does not exist. While democracy goals will not be achieved overnight, they are not a pious wish for the long term, but an urgent task for a short-term action agenda. It is that agenda that forum panelists explore from different perspectives.

DEMOCRACY BUILDING EFFORTS: CONTINUING IMPERATIVE FOR U.S. FOREIGN POLICY

— Paula Dobriansky

The heinous attacks of September 11 have forced us to rethink many things that we as Americans have taken for granted and to re-examine how we approach our foreign policy. Our response will be multifaceted and will focus on how best we protect our security and promote our interests and values abroad.

In the past four weeks, two major concerns about U.S. democracy policy have emerged:

- Will the United States continue its efforts to help build democracies abroad?

PANELISTS

Paula Dobriansky
Undersecretary of State
for Global Affairs

Paul Collier
Director of Development
Research, World Bank

Morton Halperin
Senior Fellow, Council on
Foreign Relations

Wayne Merry
Senior Associate,
American Foreign
Policy Council

Mark Palmer
President, Capital
Development Company

Moderator

Elizabeth Spiro Clark
ISD Associate

- Can we remain committed to promoting human rights abroad while building an anti-terrorism coalition with a diverse range of countries—some of whose records on human rights are frankly quite poor?

The answer to both questions is yes. Promoting democracy and human rights is central to our response to the terrorists, our fight against terrorism, and our relationship with coalition partners.

First, our efforts to promote democracy and human rights are a direct response to the challenge that terrorists posed to us several weeks ago. To cease our efforts to support more democratic forms of government and basic human rights for other people would be to capitulate, to surrender. On the contrary, the U.S. must now work even harder now to ensure that peoples around the world enjoy the freedom to participate in government, to vote in periodic, genuine elections, to associate freely, and to practice their religion freely.

Second, promoting democracy and human rights is a vital part of our response to terrorism in the long term. Strong democratic polities can minimize terrorism by guaranteeing citizen's voices, even if they present an alternative view. An open, accountable government which respects the rights of its citizens, even their right of peaceful opposition, is a strong government, able to form coalitions, to share power, to practice pluralism. Rule of law, a thriving civil society, and other fundamental democratic elements will help undermine the roots of terrorist movements. We will promote democracy because it is right and it is in our security interest.

Third, standing shoulder-to-shoulder with coalition partners to defeat terrorism does not mean we override our long-standing human rights policy. We will not turn a blind eye toward policies and practices which not only run counter to internationally accepted norms but affront all that America stands for. At this core of U.S. human rights policy abroad is the idea of inviolable and universal human dignity. Many of our coalition partners must be engaged in order to bring them on board. We may not always state publicly what we discuss behind

closed doors. But I can assure you that these issues are very central to our dialogue with these countries. They are not falling off the agenda.

Although we will have to shift and make difficult choices among competing objectives, we will not drop our human rights and democracy policies. Human rights is part of the solution to the problem of terrorism and, therefore, we will continue to urge governments and continue to work with governments based on our fundamental commitments to human rights. Our fundamental commitment is to democracy and to the development of market economies. The success of the campaign against terrorism is predicated upon those goals.

THE ROLE OF DEMOCRACY IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

— Paul Collier

Democracy and Societal Peace

There are two prevalent myths about democracy: (1) Democracy is useful for building peace; and, (2) Democracy is not useful for building economic growth.

These assertions are wrong. The literature says the evidence is a wash, but the literature does not take into account important nuances. In some types of society, democracy makes a big difference, while in others it makes no difference. Primarily, democracy makes a big difference in societies that have a lot of ethnic diversity.

Dictatorships are unlikely to span ethnic groups. They are narrow in societies with many ethnic groups because they cater to a relatively small segment of that society. Dictatorships are willing to sacrifice economic growth in order to redistribute wealth to the favored group. It has been estimated that transitioning from dictatorship to democracy would cause the economy of an ethnically diverse country to grow by an extra 3 percent a year.

There is another myth that only dictatorships can keep the lid on ethnically diverse societies in Africa. In fact, there is no relationship between ethnic (or religious) diversity and conflict. Having a dictatorship does not help. However, democracy does not

necessarily have a beneficial effect on peace either. Democracy is not the “royal road to peace.”

By and large, in Africa ethnic politics do not have a deleterious impact on political or economic development unless one group is clearly dominant; in such cases, democracy must include entrenched minority rights. In practice, most African countries do not have one dominant ethnic group.

Democracy and Corruption

Democracy can reduce corruption but the issue of political party financing must be addressed if both the goals of reducing corruption and strengthening democracy are to be achieved. Democratic politics are expensive, and the absence of public financing drives politicians to corruption as the only way to get the money for campaigning. Russia is an extreme example: Under Communism, “prohibition” produced rich gangsters, and when democracy arrived, only crooks had the money to run for office. This scenario is now being played out across Africa. We must accept that financing political parties is a legitimate use of public funds.

THE ROLE OF DEMOCRACY IN DEALING WITH INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM

— Morton Halperin

The Warsaw Declaration (June 2000) of the Community of Democracy was an attempt by the democracies of the world to build a structure to permit them to cooperate in creating an international environment in which they would be able to strengthen democracy in their own society and help other states remain on the path to democracy. The Declaration included these words about international terrorism:

We resolve to strengthen cooperation to face the transnational challenges to democracy, such as state-sponsored, cross-border and other forms of terrorism, . . . and to do so in accordance with respect for human rights of all persons and for the norms of international law.

We should utilize the Community of Democracy as a forum to organize the fight

against international terrorism. In fact, the members of the convening group of the community have already issued a statement condemning the terrorist acts of September 11 and urging cooperation among democratic states to deal with these threats. The statement declared that terrorism is a threat to all democratic states. As the Warsaw Declaration notes, if we are to be true to our own values we must pursue the terrorists, in accordance with international law and with respect for human rights. We combat terrorism by utilizing current laws or enacting new ones. We cannot, however, simply dictate what countries should do to control terrorism, and then expect them to follow our commands.

The Bush administration has begun the process of bringing the issue to the United Nations Security Council, which is charged by its Charter with dealing with threats to peace and security. The Council has determined that international terrorism is a threat to international peace and security and has demanded that all states take measures to control the finances of terrorist groups. President Bush has declared that the United States sees an important role for the UN in dealing with the future of Afghanistan. We should go further and bring the entire issue to the Security Council.

We must be for democracy and for the development of democratic systems, not just against something such as instability.

The UN has a larger role to play to make rules relating to terrorism binding for all member states, especially in the realm of the financial aspects of terrorism. The UN can also be better used to address the conditions of failed states. This may result in the actual take over of the failed states and managing them. Only by the creation of an effective regime, addressing the needs of the populace, can we reduce the likelihood of the states fostering or being used as a base for terrorism.

Democratic states should create a democratic caucus within the UN. The UN can thus become an arena where this caucus can become more dominant in dictating how things are decided at the United Nations. The UN must continue to be a universal body open to all nations but that does not mean that the democratic states

which constitute an over-whelming majority in the UN cannot insist that the organization reflect democratic values in general and in how it fights terrorism.

**STABILITY, SOVEREIGNTY, AND
 TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY:
 SUBSTITUTES FOR POLITICAL
 PLURALISM IN U.S. POLICY?**

— Wayne Merry

There is a marked contrast between rhetoric and reality in American policy on the promotion of democracy abroad. In some cases, the pursuit of democracy complements other foreign policy goals—but not always.

Congress has often been the main source for serious foreign policy actions to promote human rights and democracy. A good example of this is the implementation of the Helsinki Final Act and the establishment of the U.S. Helsinki Commission. This Commission was formed because Congress did not trust the U.S. Government to give due weight to the human rights and democracy articles of the Final Act. Indeed at the time of the passage of the Final Act in 1976 there was little expectation within the U.S. government that these provisions would have much impact. In hindsight we can now see that the Helsinki human rights and democracy principles were a powerful force in the collapse of the Soviet empire, more powerful than intelligence activities behind the scenes.

The end of the Cold War offered the opportunity to test the genuineness of U.S. commitment to global democratization. Did the U.S. really believe its own rhetoric about democracy or was it merely a tactical device used during the Cold War? The fear of some within the U.S. government in 1991 that the end of the “Evil Empire” would be “destabilizing” suggests that tactical considerations were predominant.

“Stability” is ubiquitously invoked as an overarching U.S. foreign policy goal. Like the Holy Grail, “stability” is a concept and goal that is passionately pursued but that does not exist. All too often, the quest for “stability” is an excuse or justification for resisting change. In the December 1993

Russian elections, the candidates favored by the U.S. lost in a popular referendum on market reform policies we had advocated; but the U.S. Government chose to ignore the will of the Russian people and worked to undermine the elected legislature and to pursue economic reforms through a non-transparent and non-accountable series of parallel government structures—a course of action that damages our credibility with Russian democrats to this day.

Often non-governmental actors are more effective than governments in bringing about desirable political change. Non-governmental organizations, for example, were the effective driving force behind the establishment of democracy in Belgrade and the overthrow of Milosevic.

We do not treat democratization as seriously as we should. Perhaps we should focus more on the pragmatic benefits to other countries and the long-term shoring up of stability among allies and potential allies. We need to take a longer-term perspective on our foreign policy goals. All too often, we see democracy as a *goal* rather than a continuous *process*, which makes us impatient with short-term developments.

We must also recognize that democratization in countries that are not currently democratic will not in and of itself bring about the positive results that we would want to see in other areas.

**TERRORIST DICTATORS AND
 DEMOCRACY**

— Mark Palmer

We need to have the courage and vision to identify the men in the Middle East really responsible for terrorism and develop and execute a strategy to deal with them directly. Organizing, funding, housing each of the main terrorist groups is a dictator. Each of these dictators also uses terrorism against his own people. They are each guilty of crimes against humanity. The only solution to our security problem and that of the Israelis and other democrats is to oust these dictators and replace them with democracy. Democracies do not engage in terrorism—against their own people or others. So the 22 most wanted terrorists list

was issued by the government. A list of the 48 most wanted terrorist dictators also needs to be issued.

Iran demonstrates both the problem and the solution. Hezbollah is a creature of the Iranian leadership, but only of its unelected dictator Khamenei. President Khatami, elected by the overwhelming majority of the Iranian people, is publicly opposed to support for Hezbollah, but he does not control the security side of Iran's government. Pakistan also demonstrates the same lesson. Its dictator, General Musharraf overthrew the last, democratically elected government because of his personal support for Pakistani military and terrorist attacks on and in Kashmir. Musharraf is the main supporter of the Taliban, whose dictator mullah Omar in turn is the main supporter of Osama bin Laden. Saddam Hussein is yet another example of a dictator-terrorist, as is Arafat.

As we work on and execute military options, we need to develop a political strategy first within the U.S. government and then with other key democracies. Its objective should be to oust these dictators and institute democracy. Let us begin with Afghanistan. Our enemies are not the Iranian or Palestinian people—it is the dictators who oppress them as much as they threaten us. The BBC interviewed a young Muslim recently who said that his anger at the United States was due to our support for the “tyrants” running the Middle East. That was equally true of the young Iranians who overthrew the Shah, and many of who now are the strongest democrats in Iran.

Islamic societies that lack legitimate channels for dissent and change, such as the Gulf states, Egypt, Palestine, and since 1999, Pakistan, all create frustrated recruits for radical terrorist groups like al-Qaeda. Many Middle Eastern Muslims have abandoned their previously positive views of America, as it uncritically, indeed hypocritically, has supported “friendly” autocracies in the region. Beyond the Middle East and South Asia, there are other dictator-terrorists like Kim Jong-il, personally responsible for terrorist acts. Africa faces similar dictator-terrorists in Sudan and elsewhere.

For decades we have been afraid to face facts, to identify government leaders as the

problem. We tried to pretend that Milosevic was not responsible for the terrorist campaign in Bosnia—when all of us familiar with the situation knew he was funding and directing the para-military terrorist Arkan. We are doing the same thing with the Middle East and Pakistan's dictators today.

Protection of democracy vs. promotion of democracy: what can we do?

We need to set a date for all of the dictators to allow their own, peace-loving people to gain control over their own governments, and we need to build a global coalition of democracies to ensure that this happens—the Community of Democracy, that the Undersecretary and Mort Halperin mentioned.

In his speech to the Labor Party in early October, Prime Minister Blair offered a deal to Africa. For our part the offer is aid, debt relief, training in governance and rule of law; for their part, no more tolerance of dictators, a move to full democracy and a free market economy. Blair spoke later of the right to no terror.

In terms of political/democratic planning and programs, Afghanistan is a good place to begin. We missed opportunities in Kuwait and Iraq we should not miss again. We need to back non-violent strategies and tactics. Our support for the Otpor movement in Bosnia proves that these strategies are effective, as does the movement toward democracy in the Philippines and Indonesia. The Falun Gong in China is a disciplined mass movement that deserves our support. We need a new capacity to work with Belarus, Burma, and Arab world civil societies. Fundamentalists are not the alternative. Huge changes are underway in these societies. We should support forward-looking monarchs in the Gulf region, encouraging a coalition of monarchs for democracy.

DISCUSSION

There was consensus on the panel that the fight against terrorism did not mean that the U.S. and its coalition allies should stop pursuing the goal of global democratization. On the contrary, the panel believed the U.S. must work even harder to promote democratic values and practices. In the end

democracy was not only a value in its own right but made for stronger governments and societies. Dictatorships were a breeding ground for instability and for terrorism.

Much of the discussion centered on the question of how, in practice, human rights and democracy goals would not be “contaminated” by anti-terrorism goals. ISD Associate, **Andrew Pierre**, asked whether there wasn’t a risk in bringing non-democratic countries such as Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt into the anti terrorism coalition, as they would expect as a quid pro quo that the U.S. cease to continue pressing them on the development of their own democratic institutions. Paul Collier said that to avoid contaminating the two tracks of alliances and democratization, international agencies could be useful. Terrorism used to be nationally based and thus was able to be affected by national policies. Now that it is an international phenomenon, it will take the global collective to take action. Mort Halperin said that we must rely more on the UN administering protectorates for failed states such as in Kosovo and East Timor. He stressed that we need to be for something, not just against terrorism. The goal is the preservation of democracy. It is a fight we can pursue with respect for law and human rights.

During the discussion other panelists offered specific new proposals and approaches for sustaining democracy policy alongside the fight against terrorism. Undersecretary Dobriansky said that the U.S. needs to strike a balance and keep our long terms goals in mind. While the U.S. would not drop its human rights and democracy goals, we may see the use of new and different tools. Mort Halperin underlined one change in tactics that would be useful in keeping the two tracks separate: paying openly for support from coalition partners for what we have gotten from them, including base rights. Then the transaction would be clearly seen to be acting in their national interest and the U.S. would not be open to the same pressure to ignore the lack of respect for human rights and democracy as a quid pro quo for assistance from dictatorships. Halperin added that, in practice, the U.S. would not press non-democratic governments that are cooperating

with us as hard to make reforms. Wayne Merry added that many of the countries with us in the fight against terrorism are in it for their own interests. Uzbekistan accepting U.S. troops is a good example. He said that what democracy policy needed was more resources. Like slavery and piracy, fighting international terrorism was a “global public good” and as such at a disadvantage in terms of funding.

Mark Palmer discussed a range of new tools, citing the importance of radio and television as a modernizing democratizing force; even, he said, Saudi Arabians who watch “Baywatch” are a constituency for political change. **Elizabeth Clark** said that, as one looks to new methods, one shift in foreign policy framework should be to recognize that when weak or failed states are incubators for terrorism, foreign policy strategies to promote global democratization that rely on targeting resources to a small number of “strategic” democratizing states is no longer an effective policy framework.

On the related issue of nation building, **Eric Witte**, co-director of the Democratization Policy Institute, asked whether the U.S. wasn’t sending mixed signals on its intention to stay in Afghanistan to help build political institutions. Collier said that the western governments should not do the nation building—democratization—themselves at the risk of re-inventing colonialism. However, the international community through institutions such as the World Bank could be helpful agents. Undersecretary Dobriansky mentioned the importance of non-governmental organizations in this connection, an approach that can target programs at certain sectors of society, especially women, contributing a key piece to democratic development.

Many of the questions and comments revolved around the role of democracy in preventing violence. **Herman Cohen**, President of Cohen and Woods International, suggested that violence has its roots in economic factors and that therefore it makes sense to solve economic problems before turning to democratization. Paul Collier took a different position saying that those countries that fail are havens for terrorists and that therefore it made sense to prevent them from

failing. In at least one category of states with the potential to fail—multi ethnic states—democracy helps promote positive economic change and dictatorship prevents it. In other types of state—either ethnically homogenous or one ethnicity dominant—democracy is neither a positive nor a negative factor in promoting economic growth. Therefore there are no persuasive reasons not to push democratization.

Several discussion participants challenged the main conclusions of the panel. One participant said that U.S. policy would not change. During the Cold War we supported both dictatorships and democracies.

ABOUT ISD

The Institute for the Study of Diplomacy, founded in 1978, is part of Georgetown University's Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service and is the School's primary window on the world of the foreign affairs practitioner.

ISD studies the practitioner's craft: how diplomats and other foreign affairs professionals succeed and the lessons to be learned from both their successes and failures. Institute programs focus particular attention on the foreign policy process: how decisions are made and implemented.

ISD conducts its programs through a small staff and resident and nonresident associates. Associates, who include U.S. and foreign government officials and other foreign affairs practitioners, are detailed to or affiliated with the Institute for a year or

In facing another kind of threat the response should be the same: only promote democracy when it is in our interests. Another discussion participant challenged the premise of the panel that the Islamic world wanted democracy. Wayne Merry said in response that we should not make the mistake of taking the loudest voices in the streets as representative of majority views. He added that the vagaries of birth should not determine access to human rights. Mark Palmer and Wayne Merry warned against assuming that either dictatorships or democracies are static. The nature of democracy is change.

more. The Institute seeks to build academic-practitioner collaborations around issues.

The Institute's immediate constituency is Georgetown students. ISD staff and associates teach courses, organize lectures and discussions, mentor students, and serve on university committees.

ISD's larger constituency is the broader academic and policy community. The Institute reaches this group through its conferences, working groups, publications, and research activities, which include participation by the men and women who make and influence foreign policy. ISD's international affairs case studies are utilized in classrooms across the United States and around the world.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Thomas R. Pickering
Chairman of the Board

Max M. Kampelman
Chairman Emeritus

Peter F. Krogh
L. Thomas Hiltz
Vice Chairmen

Thomas Boyatt
Chester A. Crocker
Joseph B. Gildenhorn

Brandon Grove, Jr.
Lee H. Hamilton

Brian C. Henderson
Frank J. Hogan
Arthur H. House
Farooq Kathwari

Tommy Koh
Carol Lancaster
Samuel W. Lewis

Jack F. Matlock, Jr.
Donald F. McHenry
David C. Miller, Jr.

David D. Newsom
Phyllis E. Oakley
William E. Odom

Mark Palmer
Rinaldo Petrignani
Janmarie C. Prutting
Rozanne L. Ridgway

Cokie B. Roberts
J. Stapleton Roy
Tara Sonenshine

Peter D. Sutherland
Robert Trice

Nancy Bernkopf Tucker
Frank G. Wisner
Milton A. Wolf