

September 2005

DEMOCRACY

RISING

Grassroot Revolutions

Elections
and Beyond

Building
Freedom

U.S. Agency for International Development

“So it is the policy of the United States to seek and support the growth of democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture, with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world.... America will not impose our own style of government on the unwilling. Our goal instead is to help others find their own voice, attain their own freedom, and make their own way.”

President George W. Bush
Second Inaugural Address, January 20, 2005



ORANGE REVOLUTION
Peaceful Protest

Ukrainian riot police never attacked protestors, whose orange balloons symbolized their call for democracy, November 27 2004.

Page 8

DAVID GUTTENFELDER/AFP

Overview: In a new wave of mass demands for democracy in the past two years, millions defied threats—from Kiev to Ramallah to Bishkek—demonstrating or simply voting in their first free elections. **2**

Post-Soviet Revolutions

Georgia: The Rose Revolution swept the old regime of Eduard Shevardnadze from power as thousands demanded an end to corrupt elections. . . . **4**

Ukraine: After the government rigged election results, a million people joined the Orange Revolution, leading to a new election won by Viktor Yushchenko. . . . **8**

Kyrgyzstan: In the Tulip Revolution, angry crowds in Osh and the capital

COVER PHOTO: After voting in Iraq's first democratic election in January, 2005, Iraqis triumphantly hold aloft their fingers stained with indelible ink to prevent multiple voting. PHOTO: ADRIAN DENNIS/AFP

Bishkek swiftly ousted the government of Askar Akayev after election fraud. New voting followed. . . . **14**

Near East Democracy

Lebanon: The Cedar Revolution broke out as almost a million people demanded free elections and an end to Syrian occupation. . . . **16**

West Bank/Gaza: The death of Yasser Arafat in 2004 led to new Palestinian elections, widely seen as legitimate, for president and local councils. Legislative campaigning began in the West Bank and Gaza. **18**



Iraq: Defying threats, millions voted in January 2005, for a new government coalition in one of the most free and fair elections ever held in the region. . . . **20**

Afghanistan: Loya Jirga traditional councils wrote a constitution and set up elections—8 million voted, nearly half of them women. . . . **21**

Legacy of Change

Democracy Takes Root: The new revolutions follow decades of progress in Latin America, Africa and Asia, ending dictatorial rule and nurturing governments chosen by the voters. . . . **23**



Strategy: The \$1.2 billion annual USAID democracy aid budget is based on a four point strategy tailored to assist each country. . . . **25**

Reaching for Democracy

Crowds surged through streets of Kiev, Tbilisi, Beirut and Bishkek. Millions of men and women defied threats to stand in line and vote freely in Baghdad, Kabul and Ramallah. All of them asked for the same thing: democracy.

We saw them marching for democracy through the streets of former Soviet capitals such as Kiev and Tbilisi. Millions more defied threats of violence and lined up to cast their first democratic votes in Kabul and Baghdad.

In parts of the world that had long been ruled by despots, or those who still believe a one-party state can control the lives of mankind, a vast outpouring of people reaching out for democracy stunned the world in the past two years.

One picture summed it up: in the cold dark night of Tbilisi, Georgia, as people marched towards the seat of government to protest a fraudulent election, one firm hand held up a model of the Statue of Liberty. Millions are asking for the rights that statue represents: elections to choose their leaders and freedom of speech, press and religion.

The newly elected governments face an enormous burden. They must respond to the needs of the people, and provide the services of the modern nation such as roads, electricity, health and education.

Governments must eliminate the corruption and nepotism that drain the economy. They must be accountable to the public for their spending and their actions. In short—governments must learn to govern justly.

Many people watched in wonder as the multicolored revolutions took place—the Orange Revolution in Ukraine, the Rose in Georgia, the Cedar in Lebanon, the Tulip in Kyrgyzstan. Each country had a different form of government but all were denying people a chance to choose new leaders through fair elections.

Few realized that for years, the United States and other countries and organizations have been supporting this homegrown desire for democracy.

Support for democracy around the world is not new. It has been a key part of U.S. for-

ign policy since the end of World War I, when President Wilson promoted democratic self-determination for Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary, Austria and Romania.

After World War II, the United States helped write democratic constitutions for defeated Germany and Japan—which remain democratic today.

When post-war Western Europe—weakened by war—appeared vulnerable to communism or fascism, the United States began the Marshall Plan in 1948 to rebuild its economies. All nations that got help are democratic today, from Finland to Portugal.

In 1961, U.S. foreign aid agencies were combined into the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) which focused on helping development in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Among the advances towards democracy the United States supported were the following:

- Over time, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, the Philippines and many other countries adopted democratic systems.
- In the 1980s and 1990s, Latin America changed most of its leftist or rightist authoritarian governments—Chile, Brazil, Nicaragua and El Salvador for example—to elected democracies with free press and multi-party politics.
- Then, after the fall of communism, U.S. democracy assistance helped Poland, the Czech Republic, the Baltics, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Romania and Hungary revive or create new democratic systems.
- In Indonesia, President Suharto quit in 1999 amid public protests, after 25 years in power. The country became the world's third most populous democracy in 2004 when it held landmark direct presidential and legislative elections.

THE NEW WAVE

The colorful revolutions were created by citizens from Ukraine to Lebanon, with U.S. and other support.

Ukrainian journalists, five years before the Orange Revolution, were trained by U.S.-supported groups to deliver balanced, fair reports on politics; to investigate and report on government abuse; and to throw a spotlight on fraudulent elections.

Georgian political parties learned how to organize and register their voters, train election observers, prepare party platforms and communicate their agendas to the public.

Lebanese and Kyrgyz non-government organizations (NGOs) got help from U.S. NGOs such as the American Bar Association, Eurasia Foundation and Freedom House. These groups trained people on legal issues, elections, human rights and media.

The United States was the main supporter of democracy around the world, along with the European Union and other donors. For years, America realized that economic and social development were unlikely to take place unless people can investigate how their governments operate, voice complaints, and ultimately change their leaders through free and fair elections.

The fallen rulers in some countries may blame “outside interference” for their defeat. But U.S. and other democracy aid only serves as a source of ideas and inspiration. The real work of creating democracy is carried out by courageous and committed people within the countries undergoing change. Unless people are ready for democracy, no amount of aid can make a difference.

As the dust settled on the new democratic revolutions, U.S. and other donors helped new governments carry out promises to serve honestly and fairly. International advisors helped national and local officials in many countries to write tax laws, fight corruption, revive private markets, open up

“We should all look to a future when every government respects the will of its citizens—because the ideal of democracy is universal... Millions of people are demanding freedom for themselves and democracy for their countries.”

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice
Remarks at the American University in Cairo, Egypt
June 20, 2005

1945

▲ **Germany, Japan** World War II ends, U.S. authorities move to form democratic governments

1948

▲ **Western Europe** U.S. Marshall Plan brings economic aid to support European democracies

1978-94

▲ **Latin America** 15 strongmen replaced by elected leaders in Argentina, Chile, Brazil, El Salvador, Peru, etc.

1980s

▲ **Asia** Democratic elections replace authoritarian regimes in South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, Philippines

1989-1991

▲ **Soviet Union** collapses. Democratic systems emerge in Poland, Baltics, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania

1990s

▲ **Africa** End of Cold War support to dictators bring democracy to South Africa, Mali, Mozambique, etc.

government to public scrutiny and create city councils accountable to voters.

Democracy is nothing new. The word describes the ancient Greek city states, meaning “authority of the people.” It has existed in many cultures throughout recorded history: Panchayat village councils of India; Buddhist Councils of India and China; Japan’s 7th Century constitution; and American Indian councils.

In the 13th century, the English King John signed the Magna Carta, foundation of British-American democracy, but it took hundreds of years of before its ideas were applied to all citizens. And every democratic country continues to defend and extend democratic rights.

More than 180 countries have signed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights guaranteeing people the right to chose their own government.

But it is difficult to support democracy where the leaders have no tolerance for it. Burma, North Korea and other countries will not allow freedom or those who support it to enter their borders. War and turmoil in Somalia, Congo and other countries make it difficult to support democratic institutions. Furthermore, China and Vietnam allow economic freedom but permit only limited rights to replace some local leaders. However the United States remains committed to support homegrown movements that seek freedom.

This magazine tells the story of the recent explosion of democratic values in several corners of the world. It’s the story of courageous people who seized the chance to reform and improve their own societies. One thing remains clear: while U.S. and other aid can help local people overseas strengthen their democratic political parties, conduct elections and improve their government, it is only when citizens and local leaders in each country decide to change things that countries move from authoritarian rule towards democracy. ■

CEDAR WAVE: Some of the million Lebanese who demanded democracy after the slaying of ex-Prime Minister Rafik Hariri in Feb. 2005.



DAILY STAR, BEIRUT

2000

▲ **Serbia**
uprising ousts
Slobodan Milosevic

2003

▲ **Georgia**
Rose Revolution

2004

▲ **Afghanistan**
election

▲ **Ukraine**
Orange Revolution
(December)

▲ **Palestine**
elections
(December)

2005

▲ **Iraq**
election (January)

▲ **Lebanon**
Cedar Revolution
(February)

▲ **Kyrgyzstan**
Tulip Revolution
(February)

ROSE GEORGIA'S REVOLUTION



BESO GULASHVILI/24 HOURS

GEORGIA RISING: Thousands jam Tbilisi to protest election fraud.

For 10 years, thousands of Georgia's journalists, local officials, lawyers, judges, political parties and NGOs built grassroots democracy which became the Rose Revolution when the government tried to steal the 2003 election.

TBILISI, Georgia—In November 2005 it will be two years since this ancient Black Sea country produced the Rose Revolution, when tens of thousands of people came from

across the land demanding freedom, fair elections and democracy.

Without violence they came, after an independent parallel vote count showed the government claim to have won the November 2 parliament election was a fraud.

Waving red and white banners bearing the St. George's Cross—now on the national flag—demonstrators grew in number and determination for 20 days until President Eduard Shevardnadze left his office peacefully. After 12 years in power, he was replaced by opposition leader Mikhail Saakashvili, who in January 2004 was elected president by a landslide.

Georgia's was one of four corrupt post-communist governments to fall since Serbians ousted Slobodan Milosevic in 2000.

The Rose Revolution came next in 2003



LIBERTY: As crowds surge to the parliament, a Georgian holds up a Statue of Liberty, symbolizing the democracy they want.





ROSES: The symbol of the Rose Revolution, wrapped in an election poster. KMARA

—Georgians borrowed many Serbian pro-democracy innovations. Ukraine's Orange Revolution followed in 2004; and Kyrgyzstan's Tulip Revolution took place in March 2005.

Georgia, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan quit the Soviet Union in 1991. But corruption remained entrenched and old, repressive systems of control were returning.

In 2003, Georgians thronged the main square of this city to say they would not stand for the pale reincarnation of communist rule with its corrupt bureaucracy, fixed elections, muzzled media, crony capitalism and authoritarian police.

The Rose Revolution—named after the flower Saakashvili held as he faced down police ringing the parliament—shocked the world. But not Georgia's advocates of democracy. They had been working for a decade to build a base for freedom and the rule of law, with help from U.S. and other foreign aid donors.

"The success in Georgia is a result of the people's commitment to democracy, but without foreign assistance I'm not sure we would have been able to achieve what we did without bloodshed," said Levan Ramishvili of the Liberty Institute, an NGO that received U.S. funds since 1996.

Although he was threatened and even beaten up by ultra-religious thugs opposed to his work on religious tolerance, Ramishvili continued to work with U.S. aid to "promote democratic and liberal values in the

broad classical sense—transparency, accountability," he said in his office. "The Rose Revolution was the climax of these efforts."

For example, in 1999, U.S. funding helped Georgians draw up and build support for a Freedom of Information Law, which the government adopted. That law allowed the media and NGOs to investigate government budgets, force the firing of a corrupt minister and give people a sense that they should regulate the government, Ramishvili said.

U.S. democracy grants also paid for experts from the American Bar Association (ABA), International Republican Institute (IRI), National Democratic Institute (NDI), the University of Maryland and other groups to train lawyers, judges, journalists, members of parliament, NGOs, political party leaders and others.

"From the start, U.S. aid supported civil society and created a network of civic minded people" who supported democracy and were ready to join the Rose Revolution, said the Liberty Institute leader.

Many have become leaders in the new government, such as President Saakashvili and Zurab Chiaberashvili, who was mayor of Tbilisi until July, 2005.

"Under U.S. assistance, new leaders were born," said the former mayor.

"The U.S. ...helped good people get rid of a bad and corrupted government—with-out it what choice did we have?"

The mayor said that "there is a conspiracy theory—that what happened was planned in D.C. ...It's not true. What this assistance did, it made civil actors alive, and when the critical moment came, we understood each other like a well-prepared soccer team."

The revolution really began when the government tried to ban media coverage for 50 days before the November 2, 2003 elec-

tion and "we asked other NGOs to please create public resistance to this decision," said the mayor.

LAWYERS AND JUDGES

Training and support for lawyers and judges, who had lacked the confidence of the public, bolstered a desire for a Rose Revolution. For example, NGOs organized a system of exams by 1998 to test the competency and ethics of judges, said Inga Todria, of the Association of Georgian Judges, which was set up with help from the American Bar Association.

By 2002, 90 percent of Georgia's judges had joined the group. It was a major change from Soviet times. Now, the judiciary views itself as independent from the government, said an ABA official in Tbilisi, adding: "There exists now a core group of judges who are not afraid and can resist pressure from the government."

Judge Todria said "if not for U.S. aid from 1998 to now, many judges would not be in positions they hold now. It was not just ethical and moral and financial support. But unbiased and honest judges feel strong because of support from USAID."

The new independence and honesty of the judiciary bore fruit when the Supreme Court threw out fraudulent parliamentary elections in 2003.

THE FUTURE

No one should imagine the struggle for democracy is over. But it has begun in earnest—and it needs continuing support.

If democratic governments are to win public support, they must provide services and respond to the needs of citizens.

U.S. advisors on finance, energy, transport, management and other fields assist the new Georgian ministers in improving service to the public, ending inefficient roadblocks

Students Led

U.S. grants helped students create self-government in schools which had been so corrupt that bribes often got you good grades. Students then went on to form Kmara, a non-violent pro-democracy group inspired by Serb students.

Kmara ran pro-democracy graffiti campaigns, street actions and rock concerts to raise awareness.

Student councils created a democratic spirit, said Mischa Chitadze, with an NGO in Stalin's birthplace, Gori.

Gori city council head Zakaria Demetrashvili said "USAID has been supporting self-governance by including and involving the population in a democratic process" in deciding water, road, school, drainage and other projects.



STUDENT LEADER: Giorgi Meladze, 25, led student democracy movement Kmara which ran non-violent street protests against corruption, repression and the killing of a journalist in 2000.



FACEOFF: Woman with painted face from Kmara movement at a protest demanding democracy.



SIGNING UP: Voters register Jan. 4, 2004, in first free ballot since the Rose Revolution erased fraudulent elections.

and stopping corruption. The economy was badly damaged when Russia stopped the supply of electricity, gas, fertilizer and other essentials after Georgia declared its independence and stopped payments. Many small villages are now unable to feed themselves. In Tbilisi one meets young men from

the countryside who work hard to send money to their families.

Another obstacle lies in breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, which cut off land routes to markets in Russia and Europe and left thousands of Georgian refugees in need of assistance.

The main sources of future income could be: exporting fruits and vegetables to Europe; transshipping commodities between the Black Sea and the Caspian and oil from

For Georgian Democracy

\$91 million in U.S. aid since 1994:

- Helped train judges in creating a code of ethics
- Trained journalists on reporting, ethics
- Provided press clubs for press conferences, meeting places and libraries
- Helped elected local and national legislatures develop skills in legal wording, parliamentary procedures
- Trained members of democratic political parties on campaigning, organizing, media
- Supplied technical experts to help the president's office improve efficiency
- Sent experts in transportation, energy, economy and other areas to improve budget systems, personnel systems, communications and other aspects of accountable government
- Funded NGOs that organized student councils
- Improved local governments

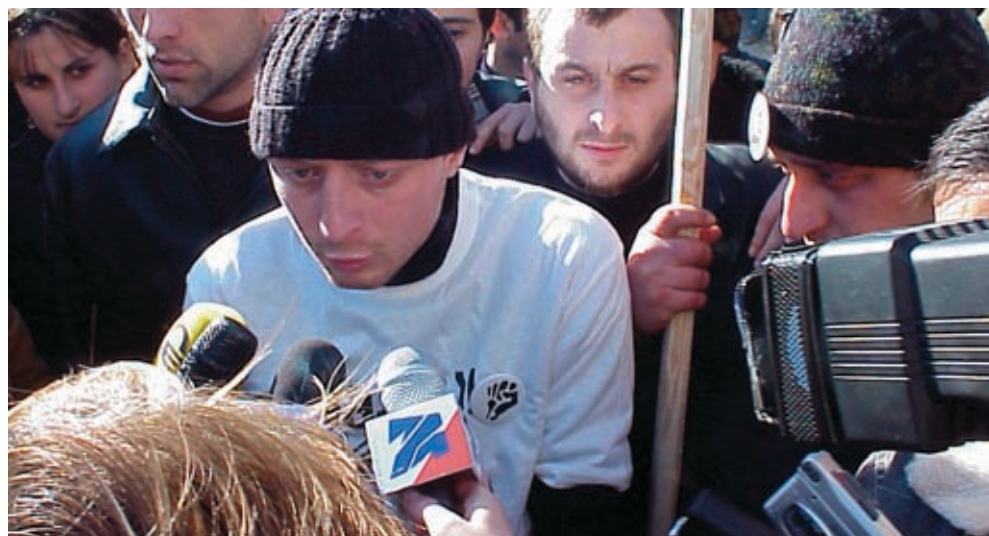
Azerbaijan to the Mediterranean; and tourism—the country's hills are crowned with ancient churches and castles.

In a broad valley an hour's drive west of the capital, farmer Eldar Midelashvili, 35, told a visitor what democracy meant to him.

"Freedom," he said, as a dozen men and women planted cabbage seedlings in freshly-turned rows of black earth. On the northern horizon, beyond the white-topped Caucasus Mountains shrouded in clouds, lay Russia.

"No one wants the communists back," he said. "Here, if you work, what you make is yours." He said that in his village of 100 families, "we vote for whom we like for the local council. In Shevardnadze's time they were appointed."

"It's good that America helps. Now we have hope that the future will be better and we are not alone. Someone will help us." ■

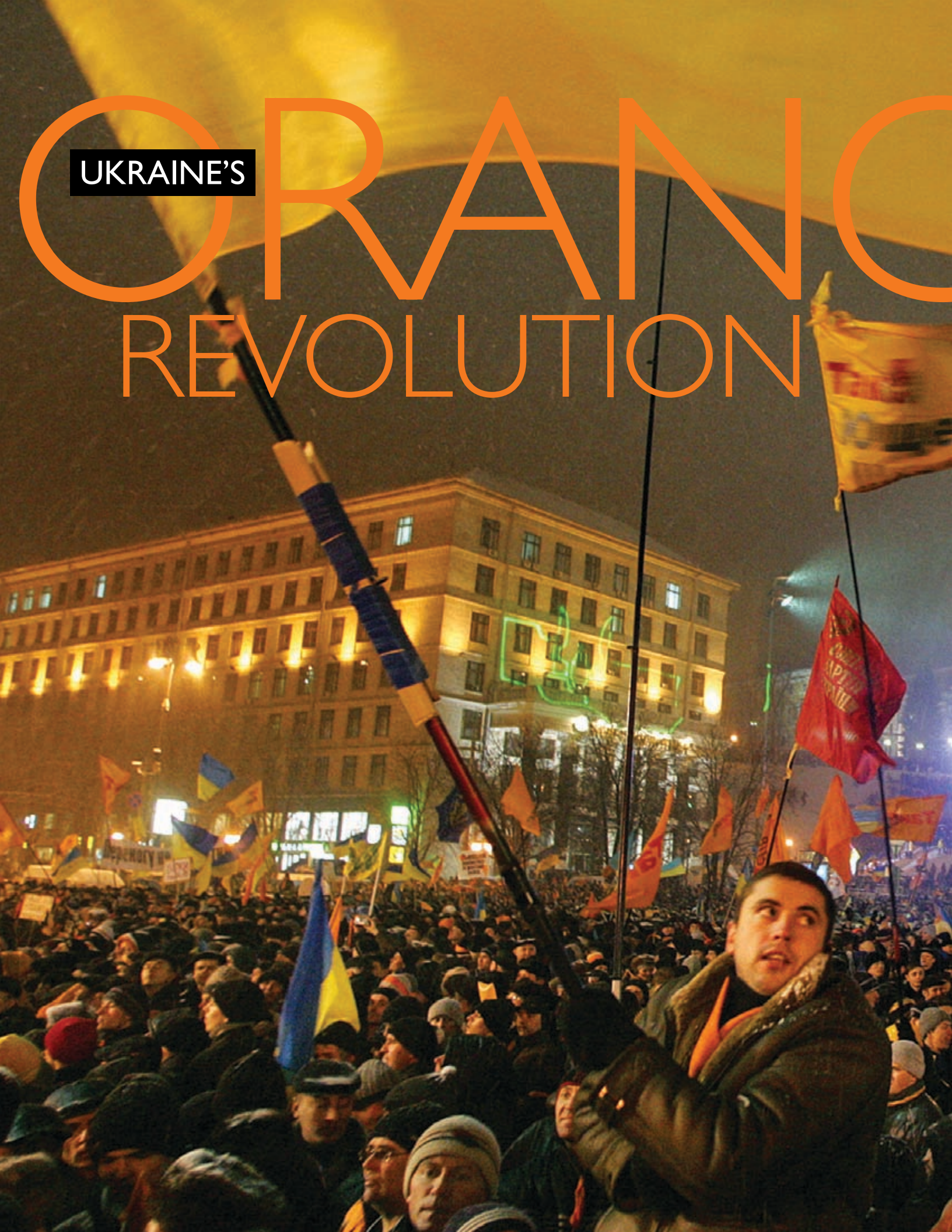


BREAKING OUT: Chants organized by Kmara movement call for new elections and an investigation of government fraud.

SPEAKING UP: A student protestor with the Kmara movement explains to the independent media the group's demands for clean, open democratic government.

UKRAINE'S

ORANGE REVOLUTION



Up to one million Ukrainians marched to the main square of Kiev November 2004, after the government committed fraud in the election. Tens of thousands camped for weeks in the freezing cold of the Ukrainian winter, waving orange banners as they demanded that Viktor Yushchenko be declared president.

KIEV, Ukraine—Observers had reported massive vote fraud in favor of Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovich. Two independent polls of voters reported that Yushchenko had won. But the government said he lost. The appearance of fraud unleashed widespread anger and the determination by many ordinary people not to stand by while the country of 50 million slid back towards authoritarian rule. The Supreme Court agreed and a new election December 26 gave Yushchenko a clear victory.

The world lauded the unexpected peaceful, democratic revolution.



ORANGE POWER: Protestors crowd Kiev's main square Nov. 29, 2004, protesting election fraud, as opposition leader Yushchenko addressed the vast crowd.

DMITRY LOVETSKY/AP



STEPAN CHUYKO/AP



BALLOONING PROTESTS: (above) Yushchenko supporters carry orange balloons in a Dec. 2 rally in Kiev. Parliament had just voted down the Cabinet proposed by the government candidate.

DEMOCRACY CAMP: (below left) An opposition supporter fills out a questionnaire Dec. 5, 2004, in the tent city up in Kiev's main square.

MONUMENTAL DEMONSTRATION: (above) Yushchenko supporters demonstrate Nov. 28, 2004 atop a Kiev statue honoring the legendary founders of the Ukrainian capital.

ALEXANDER ZBISLAVICH-FENIKO/AP



ODED BALITY/AP





HOLDING FIRE: (above) Riot police face a Ukrainian woman in front of the presidential offices in Kiev, Nov. 24, 2004.

DISFIGURED LEADER: (below) His face marked from dioxin poisoning, Yushchenko addresses a massive rally in downtown Kiev Nov. 28, 2004.



TV ALERTS NATION

When the Orange Revolution began, 29-year-old television anchorman Andriy Shevchenko was news director of Channel 5, the only regional independent TV network. He had received media training through Internews, a USAID-funded NGO, and visited U.S. TV stations where he learned about investigative reporting, balancing many points of view and other aspects of the free press.

“At 2:30 a.m. Monday after the second round of elections, strange results came from the election commission,” said Shevchenko. “Yushchenko left the commission building and said ‘we don’t trust the results.’ He asked people to come to the Maidan Nezalezhnosti [Independence Square] in the morning. At the station, we realized we would not go to sleep that night, and we kept coverage of the square for 15 days non-stop.

"The first days we were the only channel covering it. Then other channels followed." Soon hundreds of thousands would leave their homes and villages to join mass demonstrations.

"People were fed up with corruption, election fraud and the slide back to authoritarian rule which the independent press was reporting," said Shevchenko, one of 2,000 Ukrainian journalists trained over the past decade.

Support from the United States, Internets and the European Union created a feeling that others stood with them "in the trenches," said Shevchenko.

Election observers from Ukraine, the

"If you have a journalist strong enough to stick with standards, that's a little territory of freedom—and Internets trained thousands of them."

Andriy Shevchenko, News Director, Channel 5

"our poll was believable and it was used by the Supreme Court" in overturning the official tally.

"U.S. aid help for the poll was absolutely important—the poll results after the second round made people go to the street," he added.

Rachok rejects critics who say U.S. support caused revolutions in Serbia, Georgia and Ukraine: "There must be natural conditions—wise people use assistance right."

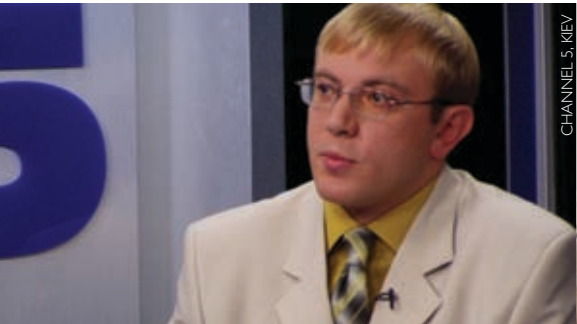
Another NGO—Development Associates—did its own democracy preparation work with the Central Election Commission, training 100,000 commissioners for the 2004 elections.

Even so, the second election round was stolen through fraud and it was only when the Supreme Court threw out the second round that the commissioners carried out an honest election count.

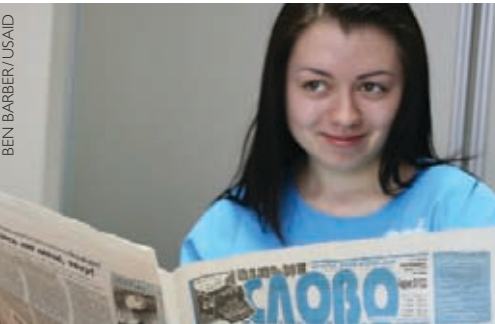
People stood up for democracy because they were sick of corrupt police, schools and tax inspectors as well as sales of big state companies to government cronies below cost.



BEN BARBER/USAID



CHANNEL 5, KIEV
BEN BARBER/USAID



BEN BARBER/USAID



NEWSMAKER: Andriy Shevchenko, then a Kiev anchorman, broadcast accusations of election fraud all night long.

FREE WORD: Reporter Lesya Alexeyenko from Zhytomyr newspaper Vilne Slovo, received journalism training.

THINKER: Anatoliy Rachok, director of the Razumkov Center, said his group's post-election polls helped Supreme Court declare electoral fraud.

United States and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe also issued widely publicized reports of fraud.

BUILDING CREDIBILITY

Credible polls helped push the public into action.

"U.S. aid helped us to conduct the poll that showed Yushchenko won while the authorities intended to falsify the elections," said Anatoliy Rachok, director of the Razumkov Ukrainian Center for Economic and Political Studies which received U.S. and Eurasia Foundation aid.

"For five years, we polled people and reported that the attitude of people towards the government was very negative. The population believed in those figures," said Razumkov.

Then, when the Center reported that Yushchenko had really won the election,

One protestor told a foreign diplomat he had worked in Western Europe and saved \$8,000.

But when he came back to Ukraine, he used up \$5,000 of it on bribes and extortion from government officials as he tried to start a small business. He then took his remaining \$3,000 and came to Kiev to join the protest and try and change things.

Freedom House gave additional aid to Ukrainian NGOs that sponsored voter education, mobilized voters to get to the polls and observed elections.

The groups also held meetings, youth dances, rock concerts and karaoke to attract young voters. They also ran public service ads on TV stations, informing people about their right to vote.

They brought democracy trainers from Serbia, Slovakia, Russia and Croatia—former Socialist countries where conditions and problems were similar to Ukraine.

Then, when the voting took place, one

NGO got 70,000 calls on its hotlines, asking for information or reporting problems.

Other NGOs helped farmers get titles to land parcels when their collective farms were broken up. Government officials were asking fees and kickbacks but the NGOs provided legal help for free. The people who received this help realized it was time to get rid of corruption in government.

Yet another NGO set up dozens of press clubs in cities around the country—places where reporters could meet, attend press conferences, read magazines and newspapers, and use the Internet.

Said one press club official: "We have experts and officials who speak on the World Trade Organization, privatization of state factories, fiscal reform, pensions, voter education, anti-corruption, anti-trafficking of women and corporate governance."

Natalia Ligachova of Telekritika—an NGO focused on press freedom—exposed secret government instructions to the media.



ASSAULTED: Ukrainian journalist Vladislav Savinok says he was beaten for his views in 2002 and police failed to intervene. He still lives in fear as democratic change moves slowly in his city.

It also collected signatures for a petition against censorship and established the first journalists trade union.

Reporters from a half-dozen regional newspapers gathered around a table in one press club and told how they had learned through training not to be afraid and to get rid of the old Soviet habits of writing whatever the government wanted them to write.

“Professionalism makes you a different person,” said one writer for a bi-weekly newspaper. Another said learning the inverted pyramid style of U.S. news writing puts the main idea on top and helps readers get the news.

NOT WITHOUT RISK

But it was not always easy. Reporter Olexiy Yermolin from a Crimean newspaper was assaulted and beaten in 2003 after reporting on black market land sales. The police did not investigate. NGO officials have also

been threatened and assaulted.

President Yushchenko’s face was disfigured in a still unsolved dioxin poisoning before the election.

Nevertheless, Ukrainians were ready and willing to carry out projects in support of democracy offered by aid groups. They offered training to all political parties on election laws, running campaigns, drawing up party platforms, communication with voters and financial management of the campaign.

Top judges in the Supreme Court went on a study tour to the United States where they were able to observe how the courts functioned.

Ostap Semerak, 33, who is now head of the secretariat of the ruling Our Ukraine faction in parliament, said he too went to the United States—to observe U.S. government in action through an association of former U.S. congressmen.

“I learned how to write laws, work with other agencies and contact peers,” he said.

For Ukrainian Democracy

\$213 million in U.S. aid since 1994:

- Trained 2,000 journalists
- Funded civic groups, opinion polls
- Trained 150,000 election officials
- Supported 96,000 domestic and 2,500 foreign election monitors
- Printed 5 million voter education pamphlets
- Broadcast election guides on national TV and radio
- Helped youth groups hold dances, rock concerts and karaoke to attract young voters
- Assisted farmers to obtain land titles when collectives were broken up, giving them a stake in government
- Trained political parties on election laws, drawing up party platforms, communicating with voters and financial aspects of campaigning
- Brought Supreme Court judges to the United States to visit U.S. courts



NEW LEADERS: Election official Andriy Mahera (left), who disavowed government victory, and parliament official Ostap Semerak, both joined democracy training projects.

Now he drafts laws on the economy.

Unless new democratic government can improve the economy, people may accept a return towards the old, authoritarian rule, as happened in many post-Soviet regimes.

Dmytro Solovey, 77, a solitary figure in blue work clothes as he wielded a spray against bugs, stood in his potato field and agreed. “There is more democracy and if it goes on like this it will be all right,” said the farmer, whose parents died during World War II when Ukraine was overrun by Nazi armies.

He said “there was more order” in the communist times and “nowadays we feel uncertain. But it’s good that the United States helps democracy grow.”

“If it continues and our government succeeds, it’ll be all right. Under Kuchma, there was no future. Our former presidents destroyed everything. They worked for their own pocket, not for the people. Yushchenko has started well.” ■

The Rose and Orange Revolutions were inspiring democracy advocates around the world. Now the democracy movement was to have its impact on Central Asia.

The Tulip Revolution that rushed across the plains of Central Asia in March was one of the first signs of democracy in the former Soviet republics of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan.

Mobs of protestors took to the streets in the southern city of Osh and then the capital Bishkek after the government was accused of fraud in the February 2005 parliamentary elections.

A month later, peaceful protests grew into a “people’s revolution”—or as others called it, the Tulip Revolution—and President Askar Akayev fled the country after 15 years in power.

The Kyrgyz Parliament called a mid-term presidential election, which was won by the interim president, Kurmanbek Bakiyev. Kyrgyz and international monitors reported the election was not completely free and fair but it was a step forward in a region not generally friendly to democracy.

Ruled by autocratic offshoots of the defunct communist parties, the five Central Asian republics had initially allowed a whiff of freedom after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Kyrgyzstan was perhaps the most open and democratic in the region. But it too moved to control the press, sell off government firms to cronies and limit political freedom by the mid 1990s. Poverty spread but a few got very rich.

In this landlocked environment—hemmed in by China, Russia, Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan—it was a shock when people rose up in March to protest the rigged election.

But those who worked to build democratic institutions in their homeland and those who supported these efforts were anticipating moves in this direction, even if not so soon and not so vigorous.

The Kyrgyz rulers were not, after all, the worst of the regional rulers.

But the Kyrgyz people had seen the democracy movement succeed in other ex-Soviet republics—the Rose and Orange Revolutions were inspiring democracy advocates around the world.

Years of work by Kyrgyz citizens was about to pay off—years spent in training NGOs to end corruption in schools, to resolve local conflicts over water, land and ethnicity, to express themselves in independent newspapers, and to monitor free elections.

It is often said that “the squeaky wheel gets the grease,” and the Kyrgyz had learned to speak out, join together in NGOs and make their views heard.

They grew to believe they could get the government to serve them and listen to their problems. Then, when the government tried to steal the election, people spontaneously rose up and threw out Akayev. However many of the old regime’s officials remain in place.

HOW DEMOCRACY GREW

Typical of the grassroots programs that supported democracy in Kyrgyzstan were grants to train 60 representatives of community self-help bodies or local NGOs in human rights and lobbying tactics in 2003 in the Jalalabad region.

The groups then published a guide to the courts explaining how they worked, the names of court members and meeting dates.

In the Naryn Oblast (region), the NGO Chinar Bak used a small grant to run seminars and create information centers in libraries on women’s rights.

The group trained 160 women in six villages and this led to advocacy actions and a change in the way the state dealt with some of the women’s issues. They won free seeds and a cut of 20 percent in water and land tax—all critical in the dry plateau—and unemployed women got help starting businesses. The group also planned budget hearings.

While many people only see elections and freedom of the press as signs of democracy, these efforts to help people bring their issues before the government, and lobby officials to provide help, are fundamental to democracy.

They allow people to take the initiative instead of waiting for a remote and cumbersome central government to act—the pattern under Soviet rule for 70 years.

For example, Islamic clerics or mullahs visited a civic education class in Karakol organized by the U.S.-based democracy NGO IFES. Students asked the mullahs why they bless the increasing number of forced marriages involving kidnapped brides.

After an uncomfortable moment, one mullah said unless the woman agreed, the marriage was improper and he would not perform it.

In other towns, Internet service was provided to open up the flow of information to previously isolated people.



FED UP: Kyrgyz men in traditional hats join in protests that brought down the government in March 2005.

Other grants to Kyrgyz NGOs trained journalists on the practical aspects of balanced reporting; and political party members got training on organizing, spreading their message and getting out the vote.

Before the February 2005 parliamentary elections, thousands of voters were taught that everyone was required to have a finger marked with indelible ink after voting, it would prevent cheaters from voting twice. NGOs supported local TV coverage of the voting in Bishkek, the capital, and in smaller cities and towns.

MEDIA MONOPOLY BREACHED

When the Akayev regime tried to prevent independent newspapers from publishing reports on corruption and election fraud, aid officials used some of the \$12 million in democracy funding provided by the Congress to support independent newspapers.

Freedom House, with funding from the U.S. State Department, shipped in a printing press, enabling the papers to publish ex-

LUTION



POLICE WORK: Kyrgyz police officers read “What Is a Fair Election?” booklets as they guard the presidential palace in the capital Bishkek on July 7, 2005, a week

before fresh elections took place. The booklets were issued by foreign democratic institutes and distributed by volunteers.



For Kyrgyzstan Democracy

\$68 million in U.S. aid since 1994:

- Trained human rights NGOs to lobby government

- Supported women's rights groups

- Brought Muslim clerics together with student councils

- Supported private newspapers

- Funded the American University of Central Asia in Kyrgyzstan



ALEXANDER ZEMLIANCHENKO/AP

NEW LEADER: Kurmanbek Bakiyev was named interim leader after the president fled the country during protests. Bakiyev arrives for a debate days before he was elected president in July. He has said he is committed to democracy.

poses of the excessive spending and wealth of the president's family—facts that enraged many in this nation of five million where per capita income was just \$1,700 in 2004.

U.S. funding also supported the American University of Central Asia in Kyrgyzstan and funded exchange programs for students and professionals in the United States.

The new president, Bakiyev, went on one of the exchange visits. Parliament Speaker Omurbek Tekebayev is another Kyrgyz who visited the United States last year under the State Department's International Visitors Program.

While supporters of the ousted regime and its allies abroad accuse the U.S. aid programs of seeking to change the government, the American programs are only aimed at promoting the rule of law and giving Kyrgyz citizens the chance to have their votes count and not accept rigged elections.

It was the local democracy movement that removed part of the old guard—the Kyrgyz themselves, some of them laying their own lives on the line in confronting the security forces, had decided to make their voices heard at last. ■

LEBANON'S CEDAR REVOLU



It was the assassination of the former prime minister in February 2005 that set off almost a million protestors whose demands ended two decades of Syrian occupation and won free elections.

BEIRUT, Lebanon—Growing throngs of people protested after a bomb killed former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri. A month after the killing, March 14, almost one million protestors took to the streets, bringing down the government and forcing Syria to withdraw its forces after 29 years of occupation.

Syria withdrew April 30 and by late June, Lebanese voters completed a four-round election that was widely seen as free and fair.

The new parliament, dominated by a group formed around Hariri's son Saad, set

to work trying to unite the communities whose civil war in the 1970s and 1980s led to Syrian intervention: Maronite and Orthodox Christians; Sunni and Shiite Muslims; and Druze.

Standing behind Lebanon's current effort to build democracy are U.S. and other international aid groups. Many had spent the past years building the foundations for democratic change. Now they can help ensure the success of what is known as the Cedar Revolution—named after the national tree which is depicted on the Lebanese flag.

Because honest local government builds support for democracy, aid groups helped more than 900 municipalities improve tax and financial records. In efficient offices equipped with Internet access for the public, people can now directly access their tax bills on a computer, without dealing with tax officials. Reducing those meetings tended to reduce corruption.

Guides were published for citizens who needed licenses or permits. These explained fees, the time to process applications and the paperwork needed to open a store, put up billboards or change the outside of a home.

Next, Lebanese NGOs backed by U.S. funding printed guides to advise municipal councils how to make meetings productive and reach decisions, not fall into chaotic, rhetorical sessions.

City and village officials were trained to write up minutes of meetings and submit

TION

and the public were able to communicate.

NGOs brought together people from different parties and communities to discuss the burning issues of the day. For example, some Shiite Muslim parties first opposed removing Syrian troops and holding elections. But once Syrians left, the parties which had joined in NGO-sponsored dialogue became part of a new coalition government.

The opinion polls helped Lebanese understand the feelings of their neighbors and focus groups helped political leaders feel the country's pulse.

Without these key measures, many provided through the State University of New York (SUNY) with U.S. funding, the Cedar Revolution might not retain support in the Eastern Mediterranean nation of four million.

And once the Syrians left and the old government stepped

down, urgent aid went to NGOs to help prepare the political parties for the elections.

For example, the Lebanese Association for Democratic Elections taught political parties how to draw up coherent and meaningful pamphlets and radio spots to communicate their message to voters.

Up to \$2 million in aid since 1994 helped the parliament to function as an institution and develop a system so the public, media and members of parliament had access to proposed laws while they are debated in committee.

Another democracy project brought NGOs together with members of parliament to debate new laws. U.S. grants also helped bloated agencies such as the civil service automate personnel files and eliminate ghost workers. Computers and computer systems helped the courts to track government transactions.

"You can't talk about democracy without transparency and accountability," said Mahmoud Batlouni, Lebanon project director for SUNY.

Improving local governance in more than 700 cities and towns, at a cost of about \$15 million every three years, was the core of U.S. support for democracy in the years before the Cedar Revolution, he said.

Since 1998, aid programs helped Lebanese municipalities conduct elections. Newly elected mayors and counselors were given workshops and training on how to write laws, draw up a budget—in short, govern justly. Municipal revenues increased 50 percent in the last few years as new financial systems improved tax and fee collections.

Mayor Assad Zogheib of the mainly Christian city Zahle said U.S. aid helped 70 percent of the country's cities and towns

For Lebanese Democracy

\$20 million in U.S. aid since 1994:

● Reformed tax offices in 700 municipalities

● Helped local councils and the national parliament speed and open up debates

● Printed guides to run local council meetings

● Supported inter-community dialogue

● Funded opinion polls and election training

computerize tax systems. But he warned that the "sickness of sectarianism is in our hearts" and Lebanon needs to work to overcome it.

"When you have educated citizens who will vote against people of their own religion or family when they are not fit for the job, that is democracy," Zogheib said.

AFTER THE REVOLUTION

The mayor of Tripoli, a city of 500,000 north of Beirut on the Mediterranean coast which received help from SUNY to improve services, said that "Lebanese democracy is a good solution to the variety of sects in the country."

Mayor Mohammed Rachid Jamaly was referring to the ongoing agreement to have a Christian as president, a Sunni Muslim as prime minister and a Shiite Muslim as speaker of parliament.

"Our election laws are undeveloped," Jamaly said. "We have features of democracy based on mutual understanding—an agreed democracy. What we need is upgrading on the municipal level."

The Cedar Revolution took place so quickly that democracy groups, NGOs, political parties and foreign aid officials are just now preparing long-term plans for the next stage of democracy-building.

"We need to double our efforts and engage civil society with government ownership," said Osamma Safa of the Center for Policy Studies.

"Lebanon needs a new electoral law, new political parties law, programs to engage youthful voters—the ones who took to the streets—and get them involved in decision-making," he said.

"I think the country is ready to get over its communal divisions, its sectarian divides. The civil sector is most secularized—most [NGOs, media] have people from all confessions."

Progress for democracy has gone too far to fall back into clan hatred, he said: "I think the process is becoming increasingly irreversible."

But "quick action should be sustained" and help should be offered to the new parliament seated in June through foreign support to the civil society groups who both train the government and act as watchdogs to see it reforms itself and cuts corruption.

"We should not stop here—our work is starting now," he said. ■



DAILY STAR, BEIRUT

SEA OF FLAGS: Lebanese demanded and won the withdrawal of Syrian troops after 20 years and new elections. (Inset) Woman and child clad in symbols of the Cedar Revolution attend mass protest.

them to the Interior Ministry for permanent record-keeping.

Revenue officials received assistance in reforming the tax system and balancing budgets. USAID and the U.S. State Department's Middle East Partnership Initiative, also provided election support.

But it was the courageous outpouring of Lebanese support for democracy in Martyr's Square on March 14 that created the Cedar Revolution.

Voting won't be enough to create democracy unless those elected learn to govern effectively, and unless the government is transparent and accountable. So new members of parliament as well as municipal leaders received kits with pamphlets explaining the nuts and bolts of democratic systems.

U.S. foreign aid provided more than booklets: it provided trainers, computers, phones, and fax machines so that officials

West Bank/Gaza

Palestinians Choose

The death of longtime Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat was followed by municipal and presidential elections as thousands of hours of preparation paid off and new leaders took their seats.

RAMALLAH, West Bank

A battle of posters is taking place in the dusty streets of Ramallah, Nablus and Gaza these days. Election posters of political candidates in dignified suits vie for space with posters of young men holding rifles who carried out suicide bombings.

The two sets of posters symbolize the choice that lies ahead for Palestinians—the path towards democratic rule through elections and peaceful resolution of conflict, versus continuing violence among rival Palestinian groups and with Israel.

Even as the future remained uncertain, and the Palestinian Authority (PA) sought to assert its authority and protect a six-month cease fire with Israel, thousands of journalists, teachers, students, women, judges and civic activists continued a decade-long process of building democracy.

Assisted by U.S. and other foreign donors, work continues to create democratic institutions which will be the foundation of a new state of Palestine, living side-by-side in peace with the state of Israel, once the peace process is completed.

The PA held fresh rounds of municipal elections in December 2004 followed shortly after by presidential elections won by Mahmoud Abbas.

Thousands of Palestinians voted, conducted the elections and monitored them. It was a sign of the widespread appeal of democracy as well as the preparation that went into the institution of elections. But democracy work has gone on at all levels.

In a Ramallah hotel recently, dozens of Palestinian men and women gathered with foreign aid officials to celebrate the completion of their master's degrees at American universities. Now they are fanning out to their jobs in the government or private sector in management, computers and other fields, bringing with them their experience in a democratic society.

Other Palestinians received training and



FACING CHANGE: Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas is shown on a billboard just after winning a landslide election victory in January 2005.

other support to work as advocates for women's rights, students and other groups.

Ma'ali Shawish, a dynamic young Palestinian woman, is one of these. For years she worked with Associates in Rural Development (ARD) which administered an \$18 million U.S. aid program over eight years to support the Palestinian Legislative Council

(PLC)—the parliament of the future state.

Legislators in the West Bank were linked with those in Gaza by video-hookup, allowing them to hold joint meetings even when travel between the two regions was blocked.

Legislators received computers, photocopiers, fax machines, phones, microphones and a system to record meetings.

Experts helped them draft laws which were then printed in booklets for the general public. Legislators were also sent to the United States and other countries to observe how other legislatures work.

In all its work, ARD said it works only with “non-extremist, respected PLC members,” Shawish said.

To build confidence that the government can address problems and is not just a source of corruption, another U.S. aid project helped PLC members get out into their communities and fix basic services.

For example, a grant helped a legislator from Nablus rehabilitate 13 schools. By fixing and cleaning the facilities—and by follow up visits to assure they remain in good condition—attendance improved and the bond between government and people was formed.

Other American aid programs helped renovate the PLC chamber; and brought school children to see the sessions.

Additional evidence that democracy is pushing down its roots into Palestinian society is that the PLC increasingly questions ministers, asking them to explain their actions or policies. Recently, demonstrations over various issues have taken place in front of the chambers of the PLC.

In fact, the banners of protestors outside the PLC reminds a visitor of the protestors outside the Israeli Knesset or other parliaments around the world. “We are more democratic than other Arabic countries,” said Shawish. “We have better freedom of expression.”

THE RULE OF LAW

Jericho is the world’s oldest continually-inhabited city, and the lowest—located at 800 feet below sea level near the Dead Sea. Now it’s struggling to install democracy by improving its judicial system.

The courthouse in Jericho was old, shabby, hot and lacked space for the prosecutors. The judges all shared one room. But U.S. aid helped rent offices for judges and prosecutors—part of a project to upgrade judicial offices in seven cities, said prosecutor Khalil Awad.

“Before that, there was no privacy and we had to interrogate suspects in the same room,” said Awad.

Prosecutors also received computers with standard indictment forms that can be filled out on screen to speed work and access files. “All this supports democracy and the public opinion” of the judicial system, Awad said.

WOMEN SPEAK UP

Palestinian women have long been a force in Palestinian affairs and now are working to increase their role in the democratic government by running for office.

One democracy group, MIFTAH, trained 150 women on campaign techniques and 95 of them won seats in municipal councils, said the group’s Lily Feidy.

MIFTAH was also one of 100 NGOs that trained monitors for the January presidential race in which 70 percent of 1.1 million registered voters cast ballots at more than 1,000 polling centers.

“The few problems I’ve witnessed were



CAMPAIGN: Palestinian Legislative Council member Dalal Salamah speaks with a constituent.

For Palestinian Democracy

\$126 million in U.S. aid since 1994:

- Linked West Bank-Gaza legislative meetings by video
- Supplied legislature with computers, faxes, phones
- Trained political parties on election campaigns
- Helped set up women’s NGOs in small towns
- Trained prosecutors and judges; repaired courts and offices
- Helped 60 students earn master’s degrees at U.S. universities
- Trained election monitors



KEEPING TRACK: Election monitors observe the officials running the vote in the Palestinian elections of January 2005.

resolved quickly,” said Khalid Nassif of the Civic Forum Institute, who coordinated a team of observers.

“I wanted to participate in the democratic process and make it more transparent,” said Rani Khalawi, a 21-year-old student who donated his time to a small NGO involved in the election observation.

“For many participants, this is the first time they take part in elections, not only as observers but also as voters,” said Aref Jaffal, head of the Civic Forum Institute, also supported by USAID.

As election monitors made their rounds, a project known as Tamkeen or “empowerment” in Arabic deployed a team to “observe the observers.” Project staff completed forms capturing what they saw.

Aside from elections, NGOs are also monitoring Palestinian and Israeli television, radio and newspapers for signs of incitement to violence.

Other NGOs prepare youth to take a

“I’m volunteering for the sake of my country—I want to show that Palestine is the first democratic country in the Arab world.”

Maha Ahmed Issa, 19, election monitor

leadership role in society. Youth for Democracy trains children ages 13 to 16 through workshops on elections, conflict resolution and mediation—then the children run elections and write about their activities as well as other local news in the *Youth Times*, their own newspaper. The youth groups have also tackled problems such as cleanliness and hygiene in the schools and villages.

One of the Palestinians who returned from his U.S. master’s degree program summed up his hopes for democracy.

“We have a chance to make a difference,” said Ashraf Al-Zaghal, who studied civil engineering at Colorado State University.

“A nation is being built and it’s on the road to statehood and independence.” ■

Iraq Embraces Self Rule

After the fall of Saddam Hussein, eight million voters showed they wanted to participate in democracy.

BAGHDAD, Iraq

Eight million Iraqis defied terrorist threats January 30, 2005 and lined up to vote in the first democratic election in Iraq and one of the most free and fair ever held in the Arab world. Voting took place six months after the Coalition Provisional Authority handed over authority to the Iraqi interim government.

Candidates from many parties reached out through television, newspapers, radio and public meetings in a free-ranging debate to win support from the electorate.

Men and women held up their ink-stained fingers with pride to show they had voted, and the entire Middle East—even the skeptical Al Jazeera television network—appeared to gasp at the enthusiasm with which Iraqis voted.

The election took place despite attacks on politicians and election workers and threats by militants to attack voters.

In April, Iraq installed its first democratically elected leaders: Kurdish leader Jalal Talabani was chosen as president and he named Shiite Arab leader Ibrahim al-Jaafari as interim prime minister.

Struggling against the ongoing violence by opponents of democracy, and against the difficulties of uniting various ethnic or religious groups, Iraqi leaders continued with efforts to build a democracy. In August, 2005, they drafted a new constitution and worked on plans for new elections to choose a constitutional Iraqi government.

The foundation for democracy was laid down soon after the end of Saddam Hussein's rule—in hundreds of local councils.

LOCAL COUNCILS

A man in a sport shirt energetically shouted his opinions while a turbaned cleric, three women, and other members of a district council listened as Iraqis met in Baghdad for the first time in their lives to explore democracy in September 2003.

"I saw that Americans are here to help us and take us from the pits," said a councilwoman who used to work in an office. "Saddam the criminal did nothing for us. The Americans gave us food and gave us elections in the neighborhood. The people chose me to be on the council."

They debated how to hire an administrator, how much to pay as salary, and how the

group could apply for a computer from the city government. Although at first some of the men, especially a turbaned cleric, refused to talk to her, they later grew to respect her and voted to send her to the Baghdad City Council representing their district.

U.S. Army Civil Affairs teams and US-AID's contractor Research Triangle Institute helped Iraqis organize meetings of local citizens across Iraq. Neighborhood leaders, businessmen, clerics, teachers and other respected residents were selected as members. The local councils in turn elected representatives to district councils and those in turn elected representatives to city councils.

The new councils, parent teacher associations, NGOs, human rights organizations, and environmental societies are giving people a voice in their own affairs and a say in how they are governed. A former official from Colorado wrote a guide for local government meetings that was translated into Arabic and distributed to the local councils.

The local councils were given small budgets so they could fix street lights, provide water or clean up streets. At least 700 local, city and state councils were established and they have run thousands of community projects.

Aid programs also sponsored thousands of meetings to help youth and other groups form NGOs to tackle local issues. In schools, teachers, parents and administrators got together to fix classrooms and washrooms or get better textbooks.

That is grassroots democracy in Iraq. ■

For Iraqi Democracy

\$708 million in U.S. aid from 2003–2005:

- \$40 million for January 2005 election
- Helped civic groups inform and train voters
- Ran TV spots with Sunni and Shia clerics promoting voting
- Trained some of 55,000 election monitors
- Set up 28,500 democracy dialogues
- Helped set up government offices in cities and governorates
- Gave \$15 million to municipal authorities for education, health, electricity, sanitation, and water
- Helped form 16 governorate councils, 90 district councils, 194 city or subdistrict councils, and 445 neighborhood councils



COMPETING: As boys chase a soccer ball, Iraq's new political parties chase votes through billboards in January, 2005.



Afghanistan

Defiant Afghans Vote

After two Loya Jirga national councils set up an interim government, millions of Afghan men and women defied threats by the defeated Taliban and voted for the country's first democratically-elected president.

KABUL, Afghanistan

The pink and blue posters stuck on mud walls of Afghan cities and villages last year invited Afghan men and women to register and vote in the first presidential election in the history of this nation of 30 million.

"We have never had elections but we know that other people have them and we want to decide who will rule us," said an Afghan farmer in a village outside Jalalabad.

In Tormay, Jalalabad and across this Texas-sized country, candidates formed 20 political parties and joined coalitions preparing posters and radio advertisements to support their views.

For people who lived under a monarchy and then communism and finally a medieval theocracy that stoned people to death for religious crimes, this is a new era.

"A lot of people argued the [Afghans] were not ready for elections—they were proved wrong so far," said the U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan in 2004, Zalmay Khalilzad.

The Taliban threatened to kill anyone who registers to vote. But with U.S., UN and other aid, over 10.5 million Afghans registered to vote.

Moreover, in a land where only three years earlier the Taliban barred women from even leaving their houses unless accompanied by a male relative, 41 percent of those who registered were women.

"The participation is amazing," said David Singh, spokesman for the UN Assistance Mission. "There was a lot of skepticism about this process at the beginning."

October 9, 2004, three-fourths of the registered voters turned out to cast ballots, electing Hamid Karzai with 55 percent of the vote. To avoid fraud, voters dipped their thumbs in ink. The elections were widely acclaimed, despite some controversy, as reflecting the will of the Afghan people.

A poll by the Asia Foundation before the vote said 81 percent of Afghan planned to



ALBANA VOKSHI/USAID

WOMEN: Voting in Kabul at first presidential election in Afghan history, October 2004.

vote and 77 percent said they thought the elections would "make a difference."

AFTER THE TALIBAN

Soon after the Taliban were driven from power in 2001, steps towards democracy were begun by Afghan leaders working with U.S. and other international agencies at the Bonn conference. It called for an Emergency Loya Jirga or national council which met in June and established the Transitional Islamic State of Afghanistan.

A second Loya Jirga adopted a new constitution establishing an Islamic Republic in January 2004. U.S. aid supplied security, transport, constitutional advice and the giant tent in Kabul where it took place.

The United States gave \$85 million to

"They are thirsty for this openness. It's like taking birds out of a cage."

Abdul Rauf Lival,
Pashwak news editor

support the elections, more than any other donor. This paid for training of poll watchers, printing of field manuals, civic education for the public and security for the polls.

Beyond supporting the elections, aid has constructed 20 courts, trained nearly 600 judges and printed 1,000 copies of Afghanistan's basic laws in Dari and Pashto language. Training and other preparation are going on for the next big step towards democracy—parliamentary elections in September 2005. NATO had said it would send 2,000 more troops to provide security against attacks by holdouts of the Taliban



ELECTION INK: An Iraqi man dips his finger in ink after voting in January 30, 2000 elections to prevent voting more than once.





LOYA JIRGA: Afghan men and women delegates attend one of the Loya Jirga national assemblies which set up a temporary government and constitution.

determined to intimidate the Afghan public which remains equally determined to vote.

RADIO WAS KEY

Since 64 percent of Afghans cannot read and many live in remote regions without the opportunity or the cash to buy newspapers and magazines, radio is the key to building democracy. Dozens of new radio stations have taken to the airwaves, supported by aid grants.

Aina, an NGO backed by U.S., French, Finnish, Japanese and other aid, produces newspapers, magazines and radio news programs distributed around the country.

In collaboration with UNESCO and the Women Publishing Group, Aina started the first community radio programming for women in 2003, broadcasting four hours per day in numerous local languages.

Aziz Ullah, 30, editor of Aina's children's

magazine *Parwaz*, runs articles that subtly teach children to respect those who are different from them—not to hate them as the Taliban did. “One article tells how bubble gum is used by children around the world,” Ullah said. “Indirectly, Afghan kids learn that there are kids in America and elsewhere who like gum.”

“My idea is that the magazine goes through the children to the family,” Ullah said. “In most of Afghanistan, the children can read—not the parents.”

In another Kabul house, the first Afghan news service—Pashwak—trains reporters. Their stories are burned onto CDs and the NGO Internews delivers them by taxis around the country to 50 radio stations. The Institute for War and Peace Reporting trained the Pashwak staff, headed by news editor Abdul Rauf Liwal, 46.

“This is the first time in this country's

For Afghan Democracy

\$213 million in U.S. aid from 2001 to 2005:

- Constructed 20 judicial facilities
- Trained 550 judges
- Printed Afghanistan's basic laws in Dari and Pashto
- Provided funding, security and logistics for two Loya Jirgas in 2003
- and 2004 which created the interim government and approved a new Afghan constitution
- Supported 2004 presidential elections through voter registration, education, monitors, logistics and security
- Built schools and a dormitory for girls; helped women run for office

history we can write and say what we want,” said the portly, middle-aged newsman as a dozen young reporters wrote their stories for him to edit. ■

The Legacy

In recent years in Africa, Latin America, and Asia, countries have dumped their strongmen for democratic elections.

The earlier articles in this magazine describe the powerful wave of democracy movements emerging in the last two years in Ukraine, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, the West Bank and Gaza, Afghanistan and Iraq.

On this page and the next, we describe some of the many countries that have moved towards democratic systems in the 1980s and 1990s and ways the United States was able to assist them.

Mongolia

In the eight centuries since Genghis Khan united its tribes, Mongolia has been a nomad empire, an oriental khanate, a theocracy, a Chinese vassal state and a Soviet satellite.

The ex-communist Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party (MPRP) gradually yielded power during the 1990s to the Democratic Union Coalition (DUC), which won the national election in 1996. Since then, parliamentary elections returned the MPRP overwhelmingly to power in 2000 and produced a coalition government in 2004.

The United States began working with Mongolian democracy advocates in 1991. The initial focus was on supporting demo-

cratic leaders and a civil society movement. Soon afterwards, the first major peaceful alternation of political power took place when these democratic leaders swept into office in 1996.

Since then aid groups have helped Mongolians to ensure that elections and political processes remain competitive. It has also supported the birth of an independent judiciary.

In 2000, the MPRP re-gained power, and for the last four years the competitive aspect of Mongolian politics was at risk due to MPRP dominance at all levels of government. In 2004, Mongolians held their seventh national election since 1991, and installed a coalition government.

Mali

Mali, a sub-Saharan nation of 12 million, has become one of the most stable and democratic nations in West Africa.

The United States worked closely with Mali since the early 1960s. But it was only in the 1990s that political developments allowed democracy-building programs such as support for elections and women candidates.

Dictatorial rule ended in 1991 and the first democratic presidential election was held in 1992. After reelection in 1997, President Alpha Konare continued political and economic reforms and fought corruption. In 2002, he was succeeded by Amadou Toure.

Mali held the chairmanship of the Community of Democracies in 2005.

The West African country also moved to hand power to local officials and move away from the highly centralized French colonial system.

Malian women such as Ba-Aminata received U.S.-sponsored training to improve their villages or run for office.

The number of women holding communal council seats rose from 22 in 1999 to 41 in 2004.

US-MALI: President Bush and Mali's former president Alpha Oumar Konare at July 2005 G8 summit in Scotland.



East Timor

In a climate of calm, the tiny island nation of East Timor elected in August 2001 a constituent assembly of 88 members who were promptly charged with drafting a constitution for the emerging nation.

Two years earlier, a referendum on independence from Indonesia led to a violent reaction by those against independence. Nearly 90 percent of Timorese voted for independence and in reaction groups aligned with Jakarta killed 1,000 people. The conflict displaced a quarter of the country's population, and sent many fleeing into the adjacent Indonesian province of West Timor. Most of East Timor's infrastructure was destroyed.

Out of the chaos of 1999 that left al-

most nothing standing—either physically or institutionally—aid donors have helped Timorese to build an independent nation.

U.S. aid averages \$20 million a year, largest of all bilateral aid programs. It helped civil society by providing grants to Timorese NGOs and media organizations.

Many of East Timor's future jurists and legal professionals are being trained through aid programs. The Agency is also helping international efforts to address past injustice by supporting investigators and prosecutors of perpetrators of human rights abuses and other crimes.

Doctors, lawyers, civil servants, health officials and educators have received training through aid programs.

“The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.”

Universal Declaration
of Human Rights
1948

South Africa

South African democracy and human rights advocates received U.S. aid since the 1980s, long before the fall of the white-dominated apartheid government.

In April 2004, South Africa held its third free and fair national elections.

Democracy assistance focuses on fighting crime, improving local government services and beefing up civil society to engage with government.

Another focus is victim support to women and children; and bringing together counselors, officials and community leaders to reduce the effects of the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

But some are frustrated. Only 57 percent of South Africans believed their democracy was better than any other form of government, a 2002 survey found. Low voter turnout in 2004 was another indicator of this frustration.

MANDELA AND MBEKI: The former and current presidents campaign in 1999.



Mozambique

After the 15-year civil war in Mozambique ended in 1992, the southeast African nation of 20 million people made quiet, steady progress towards democracy, reconciling the former enemies and improving the economy.

U.S. and other foreign assistance helped move the country back from the brink of total state failure by helping Mozambiquans run elections, support for the National Assembly, building civil society and training the two major political parties that were armed opponents only a few years earlier.

Fighting corruption was another focus

of aid, leading to Mozambique's steady economic growth. In 2004, its economy grew by an estimated 8 percent.

With each election, domestic observers played a growing role in assuring fairness and transparency. In 2003 municipal elections, a parallel vote count helped assure results were correct and accepted by all.

In December 2004, voters elected Armando Emilio Guebuza as president.

PICTORIAL BALLOT: A voter holds up a ballot with presidential candidates on the final day of voting, Dec. 2, 2004.



El Salvador

A decade after a 12-year civil war left 75,000 dead, El Salvador is a stable democracy with a market-friendly economy and active civil society.

During the 1980s, El Salvador was the largest recipient of U.S. aid in Latin America as it struggled against leftist insurgents. Since the 1992 peace accord, U.S. aid went to elections, legislative and judiciary reform, and municipal services.

U.S. assistance helped former guerrillas reconcile with the government which brought the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) into the electoral process.

Support for the Legislative Assembly improved the caliber of deliberation and provided political space for the FMLN to emerge as a viable opposition party.

Before the peace accord, El Salvador's judicial system was seen as an instrument of repression. U.S. aid helped the courts investigate high profile cases of death squads by providing funding, technical assistance, equipment, and training.

EAGLE EYED: Woman watches counting of ballots bearing party symbols.



A Strategy for Democracy

Each country has its own path to democracy so the U.S. aid offered must be adapted to help out.

As a matter of principle, as a part of national security, and as an indispensable element of development, the United States supports the development of democracy and good governance throughout the world. At the heart of U.S. support for democracy is the fundamental goal of expanding the global frontiers of democracy. This consists of supporting fledgling democracies, consolidating democratic transitions, and backing democratic openings in the world's remaining autocracies.

Because every country has its own unique political culture and circumstances, democracy experts have developed a flexible approach that works worldwide. At its core is the ability to assess each country's political environment and to help sympathetic forces expand democracy.

Country assessments are an early step. They are guided by a unique system of analysis for identifying critical democracy problems in each country's political system. Through this assessment, U.S. aid adapts its approach and emphasis to fit the local context and address the most pressing issues.

The assessment results in recommendations consisting of a mix of the following four program elements.

Free Political Competition

The expansion of political freedom and competition—the essence of a democratic state and society—is supported through multiparty elections, private voluntary associations (particularly watchdog groups), and an independent press.

Free, fair, transparent multiparty elections and representative, responsive political parties are promoted by U.S. aid projects. These projects provide expert advice on election administration, law, constitutional provisions, and electoral commissions, as well as supporting the UN and other international bodies in the actual administration of elections.

Aid programs train domestic and international election monitors to ensure fairness and transparency, and train civic groups to conduct parallel vote counts ensuring a real-time public check on official election results.

Nonpartisan assistance is provided to

democratic parties, including advice and training on democratic campaign techniques, campaign messages, party platforms and internal structure. Training is also given to civic educators to aid in registration and voting campaigns. The aid projects bring political actors to the table to discuss and address disputes, and political parties are helped with internal governance, constituent outreach, polling, leadership recruitment, and training.

In addition to elections, U.S. assistance focuses on structural competition such as checks and balances between executive, judicial, and legislative branches; decentralization of authority; and on competition of ideas through media outlets and civic organizations.

Rule of Law

No democracy can function without an effective and efficient legal system based on clear rules, an independent judiciary and legal restrictions on the state itself, especially for human rights.

U.S. aid provides legal advice on constitutions, codes, laws, and regulations. The goal is to improve laws and institutions such as the judiciary as a check on the executive, while providing support for due process, nondiscrimination, and representation of all segments of society.

Support is given to local groups that test human rights cases in court, as well as groups that provide legal assistance, mediation, and dispute resolution. U.S. funded programs support private law schools and bar associations, and build the capacity of the judiciary, prosecutors and other institutions of the justice sector.

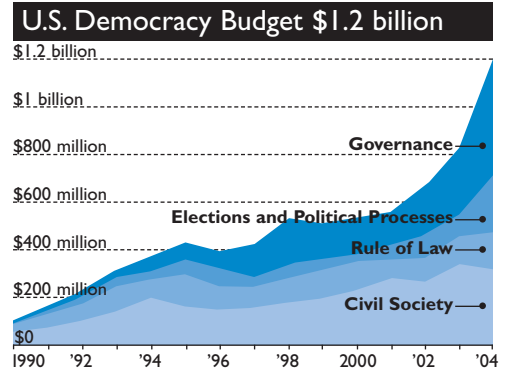
Accountable Governance

Building democratic and accountable governance is the third major goal, in both the state and non-governmental sectors. The failure of democratic governments to meet realistic needs is one of the reasons for democratic backsliding.

Support is offered for the effective, transparent and accountable provision of public goods and services, public oversight, and meaningful separation of powers with checks and balances.

Corruption is tackled through independent audit agencies, anticorruption commissions, procurement reform, and legislation as well as civil society groups, the press, and the business sector.

The strategy is to strengthen local governments through the improvement of budgets, financing, provision of basic servic-



es, and community participation.

Aid projects improve the effectiveness of ministries, executive offices and legislatures through staff training, policy development and research, basic materials and hardware.

Support is given to human rights organizations focused on issues such as trafficking, while civilian government offices responsible for military oversight receive training. Democratic policing and dialogue between police and communities are also funded.

Citizen Participation

Helping NGOs to engage society and help citizens to participate in and monitor government is the fourth key element. The most durable democratic transitions are driven by a broad-based civil society movement, crucial for transparency and pluralism. It often serves as the link between U.S. support for democracy and governance and that for economic reform, education, and the other building blocks of development.

Civil society organizations hold government accountable, organize and mobilize the public, and deliver better health and education services. Equipment and training are provided to media as well as support for production of radio programs for public information and civic education.

A key feature of U.S. assistance is flexibility: the use of a range of instruments to fit the needs and circumstances on the ground. These include grants to local groups, grants for partnerships and contracts for specific goods and services.

All these efforts are based on U.S. desires to assist people in securing democratic systems to improve their lives and the future of their children. ■

For further information on USAID democracy assistance see: www.usaid.gov/our_work/democracy_and_governance

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ELECTORAL GER: Mongolian votes at her remote ger, or tent, in presidential election, May 2005.

